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ABSTRACT

Specialist schools in Western Australia are central schools having a special emphasis in their curriculum (such as music or mathematics) but also offering the regular range of secondary school courses. They provide specialization for selected students of particular talent or skill. This study investigated the background and current nature of specialist schools and community attitudes toward them. Data were collected from interviews and meetings with departmental personnel, telephone surveys of parents, and questionnaires from teachers, parents, and community residents. A large number of diverse findings emerged. Generally, community responses indicated a preference for choice of secondary schools but the criterion for choosing a school was more commonly academic or discipline standards rather than special curriculum offerings. Researchers noted a conflict between community support for specialist schools for students with unusual ability and the demands for high academic standards and a wide range of opportunities for everyone in all schools. The 21-page questionnaire used in the study is reproduced in the appendix. (Author/JM)

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REPORT OF THE SPECIALIST SCHOOLS STUDY

R.A. Docking, A.J. Watt, S. Joyce

A project conducted jointly
by the Murdoch University and
the Education Department of
Western Australia

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FOREWORD

The study of specialist schools is one of a series of research and evaluation projects commissioned by me during 1977 and 1978. These projects, focusing upon important local developments and issues, have been joint exercises involving the Education Department and a university or C.A.E. It has been gratifying to observe the readiness of these institutions to participate in these projects and to witness the high level of co-operation that has emerged during the course of the projects.

It is my intention to publish the reports of these studies so that as well as contributing to Departmental planning they may also serve the purpose of informing professional discussion and debate on key educational issues.

Specialist secondary schools have been a feature of the Education Department of Western Australia since the enrolment of a special music group at Perth Modern School and the establishment of a special art class at Applecross Senior High School in 1968. Now, a decade since the inception of this scheme, it is appropriate to review this kind of educational provision. In addition, the timeliness of this study has been heightened by the current interest in the extension of choice in education. The provision of specialist secondary schools is closely related to this particular issue as readers of the report will discover.

I wish to thank the members of the research team located at Murdoch University who undertook the study of specialist schools, members of the management committee for the project, and the parents and school staff members who participated in the surveys.

D. Mossenson

D. Mossenson
Director-General of Education
December, 1978

LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT

by

Professor Brian V. Hill, Chairman of the
Management Committee of the Specialist
Schools Project

Dear Dr. Mossenson,

In April 1977 you invited the School of Education at Murdoch University to conduct an enquiry into community attitudes towards the provision of "Specialist" secondary schools. You will recall that, by mutual agreement two members of the School were appointed as project directors and Mrs. Sandra Joyce was seconded from your Department to provide research assistance. A management committee was also formed to facilitate liaison between our two institutions and to deal with such questions of confidentiality and investigative independence as might arise. The committee was composed of the following persons:

Professor Brian V. Hill	Chairman
Professor Barry McGaw Dr. Colin Marsh	School of Education Consultants
Dr. Ian Fraser Dr. Norman Hoffman	Education Department consultants
Dr. Russell Docking Dr. John Watt	Project Directors
Mrs. Sandra Joyce	Project Officer and Secretary

It is now my pleasure to forward the directors' report, together with the committee's unqualified endorsement of their efforts. The exercise has been an interesting one for all concerned, including many parents who, in responding to the main questionnaire, gratuitously added their thanks for the opportunity to ponder the questions posed and to express their views.

I think it only right to mention that one of the questions in the minds of the university participants was whether, given the extent to which they were dependent on Departmental co-operation, they might experience some constraint in maintaining their independence as research workers to examine and report on anything they considered relevant. This was an important concern, given that co-operation on these terms is a relatively new thing in West Australian education, and guidelines were therefore few. In the event, all doors were open and, I believe, the directors utilised their freedom in a responsible way. Those who read the report must finally, of course, be the judges on both points.

The committee expresses its strong hope that you will consent to make this report fully public, as the final step in an open investigation.

We would also like to see some acknowledgement made of the special efforts of certain people to smooth the way for our inquiries, in particular the principals of co-operating high schools. Their names are appended to this letter, and we recommend that each one receive a complimentary copy of the report.

It only remains to repeat our general satisfaction with the terms under which this investigation proceeded, and our hope that other opportunities may arise to do similar things, in the interests of those whom our schools are attempting to educate. Some further areas of needed research arising from this study have been identified in this report.

Yours fraternally,

Brian V. Hill.

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PREFACE

This study focuses on the attitudes of parents and teachers toward existing and proposed or possible specialisation in W.A. secondary schools. It investigates the degree to which the community is aware of existing specialisation, reactions to various forms of specialisation, and the issues and problems involved. It also examines the degree to which parents would favour relaxation of the boundary system to choose between secondary schools and the factors which would influence possible choices.

This report presents the project team's finding and conclusions. The selection of comments and interpretation of data are the joint responsibility of the members of the team.

The authors wish to thank the generous assistance of many who helped this study reach this point of publication:

the Principals of Government Secondary Schools in the metropolitan area of Perth, who responded so willingly to the telephone survey;

the principals, teachers, children and parents who assisted in the distribution of questionnaires at selected schools;

the teachers, parents, and citizens who gave so much of their thoughts and time answering the questionnaires;

Mr. Bill Nash and Ms. Lesley True who coded the questionnaires in preparation for analysis;

the typists who prepared drafts and final copy, Keiko Lewis, Allison Turley and Rosie Anderson;

the School of Education, Murdoch University, and the Education Department of Western Australia.

R.A.D.
A.J.W.
S.J.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Early in 1977, discussions between the Director-General of Education and staff of the School of Education at Murdoch University led to proposals for a joint study of community attitudes to specialisation in Western Australian secondary schools.

In broad outline, the terms of reference for the study were established as follows:

> To investigate the background to and current nature of specialisation in Metropolitan Government secondary schools and to report on community attitudes to existing and possible future specialisation in Western Australia. The focus of the investigation was to be State secondary school specialisation of a centrally-initiated nature (as opposed to various school-based developments).

The term "specialist" seems to have different meanings in different settings and may be used with different meanings in research literature. Specialisation may cover anything from a whole new school system to a new curriculum package. It is therefore necessary to clarify what is meant when the term is used, particularly in relation to centrally-initiated versus local "specialisation". Within the Education Department itself, from teachers through to senior administrators, a diversity of interpretations is evident and there is a considerable lack of awareness of, or consistent terminology for Specialist Schools. For the purposes of this report, then, "Specialist School" refers to a centre established by the Education Department to offer specialist studies in selected subjects, together with the regular range of school subject offerings. Such studies provide extension and specialisation for students of particular talent or skill, and regular boundary restrictions are waived to allow selected students to attend the Secialist Schools. This study also considers schools whose speciality is distinctive administrative structures and approaches to teaching, but curriculum specialisation is very much at the centre of attention.

In undertaking the investigation, techniques used for collecting information were:

- Interviews with appropriate Departmental personnel
- Meetings with various school personnel
- A Metropolitan-wide telephone survey of the status of music (as one example of a specialist area) in the schools; with follow-up
- Document survey and review of Departmental records, reports and publications
- Questionnaires, completed by 1361 parents and neighbours of year 10 students from selected schools
- Questionnaires, completed by teaching staff (358) from the same schools.

The first part of this report covers the background to specialisation in W.A. State secondary schools (Chapter 2) and a description of current specialist schools, together with existing definitions and an analysis of discernible forms of specialisation (Chapter 3).

An explanation of the research methods employed (Chapter 4) and the presentation of the results of the investigation (Chapters 5 and 6) constitutes the second part of the report. Chapter 5 presents the results of the survey of teacher and community appraisals of specialisation and related issues. A discussion of these results and conclusions drawn from the survey are contained in Chapter 6.

The final part of the report contains suggestions for directions which might be taken by further investigations (Chapter 7).

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

By 1967 the comprehensive type of school had become well-established in Western Australia. Government secondary schools were all non-selective, co-educational, comprehensive district schools, as opposed to the mixed pattern of a variety of secondary schools planned to suit different abilities which had previously characterised secondary education in W.A., with Perth Modern School operating on the basis of selective entry requirements to educate what was recognised as the educational élite.

The adoption of the comprehensive principle had come about as far back as 1954 with the recognition that the rapidly increasing student population should be provided with an education to cater for all needs regardless of the background or ability of the various individuals concerned. The emergence of this new philosophy owed much to the egalitarian principles of a democracy; it was expected that the school system should reflect the community's expectation that it be egalitarian and non-segregational in nature. The view was taken that a sound general education was a right for all individuals and not merely for a select minority.[1]

Against stern opposition from some quarters such as the Old Perth Modernians,[2] the emphasis in Western Australian secondary schools changed from a strong academic or vocational focus with various streams for general, commercial and technical studies, to a much broader approach which sought to promote full personal development as well as academic experience for all students. A sound general education was to be offered to all secondary students, not only to an academic elite. A comprehensive school, as outlined in the Discipline Report,[3] is concerned with the full range of types of human development, activity, and behaviour for students from all segments of society. Thus, secondary education became the education not of a minority or of a selected group, but of all adolescents, irrespective of their variety of talents, interests, or prospects.

With the establishment of the comprehensive secondary schools came the recognition that within the concept of comprehensiveness (non-selective enrolments and a comprehensive programme) there was much room for various types of approaches to school organisation and management. The present Director-General of Education made it clear to the Specialist Schools Study Project Team that he wished to encourage such school-based variation and would like to see the schools accept increased autonomy in the development and interpretation of organisational and administrative patterns within the Schools. However, when new approaches were adopted or special strengths created on the initiative of school personnel, such schools could not be classified "Specialist" in terms of the definition held by the Department; specialism in this restricted sense of the term, could be claimed only where a particular programme or organisational feature had been centrally-initiated and the school thus given an official status, with consequent departure from boundary restrictions to allow intake from beyond the local area. A school becomes a Specialist School only by meeting these criteria. (There has been one exceptional case in which a school (Scarborough) requested categorisation as Specialist and was recognised by the Department, given official status and allowed relaxation of boundary conditions).

While the diverse features of the comprehensive school were found to cater for a wide variety of student types with a wide range of differing backgrounds, abilities and interests, the perennial problem of catering for the gifted and talented in various fields continued to exist, and was, in fact, brought into sharper focus after the abolition of the selective entry school. The Education Department had been making provisions for students handicapped in various ways but had offered few additional special provisions for students with special talents. (Differentiated courses in some subjects such as Mathematics and Science were designed to cater for more able students). Being strongly committed to the comprehensive principle, the Education Department did not wish to depart from the essential feature of this concept; the provision of a broad similar range of subjects in each school. Discussions in the Secondary Division led to the proposal of a system which was intended to allow the Department to maintain the comprehensive principle in all schools, with special modification to allow extra provisions in selected secondary schools.

The new system was foreshadowed in 1967[4] when applications were invited from students who were gifted musically or who possessed strong talents in art to attend schools where special courses in these areas would be offered in 1968. An important feature of these proposals was that students should study the special subject IN ADDITION TO the full range of other subjects offered in the schools. In this way, maintenance of the comprehensive principle could be upheld, with the addition of special extensions in some schools.

The modification of the comprehensive principle to allow for the provision of special classes in art and music to cater for particular needs, did, however, herald a partial return to strongly competitive selective procedures to determine intakes. Since limited places were to be available for the particularly talented, selection was unavoidable. But, an additional dimension was incorporated into the selection procedure which had not been called for at the outset; on the basis of the fact that specialist studies were to be additional-to a full range of school subjects and activities and that outside-school tuition would be provided by community leaders in each field, it was argued that selected students should be of high general academic ability as well as having special talent or skill. Thus, although it was not the original intention of the Education Department, selective procedures were adopted which involved the use of measures of intellectual ability as well as performance in the selected special subject.

The first Specialist Schools were operative in 1968. At Perth Modern School a special music group was enrolled, and a special art class was selected to study at Applecross Senior High School.

Annual Reports indicated that the experiment in specialisation was generally considered satisfactory. Students concerned received valuable assistance in the development of their special abilities and contributed to the general tone and activities of the selected schools. Much was made of the successes of the special music school students, their musical contributions to special occasions being highlighted in Annual Reports over the ensuing years and their academic successes being documented as a special feature also. In fact the special music students became the focus of all Annual Reports on music from 1968.

The adoption of the Specialist Schools having been deemed successful and worthwhile, additions to the scheme were proposed. In 1969 the Education Department initiated the formation of a special class for the mathematically talented at Hollywood Senior High School and the project was continued in 1970.[5] However, in spite of internal reports of success and of the approval of the Secondary Division, pressures exerted by a neighbouring school which objected to the loss of some of its talented students to Hollywood led to the project being abandoned. (The intake groups were small and did not extend far beyond the local area. These groups continued through the school in spite of the project being discontinued).

It is interesting to note that the short period during which Hollywood was officially recognised as a specialist school created an image which has remained with the community to the present day. Even senior Departmental personnel, when interviewed about specialisation, cited Hollywood as an existing example of Specialist Schools (referring specifically to Mathematics and not to the special provisions made in the school for the physically handicapped). Many teachers continue to think of the school as a Specialist Maths School and the misconception is certainly perpetuated within the general community; The Principal reports continuing inquiries from parents of children perceived to be talented mathematically, seeking advice on the procedures involved in enrolling their children in the "Special Maths School". The existence of these misconceptions was later confirmed by community and teacher responses to the Questionnaire.

While the specialist Mathematics project was judged by some to be unsatisfactory on the grounds that it contradicted the comprehensive principle by creating a mathematical "elite", continued positive reports from the art/craft and music classes, without opposition, encouraged the Education Department to extend the specialist concept. The Dettman Report[6] offered strong support for the move and encouraged the provision of specialities for children with exceptional talents.. Thus, in 1971, the first special language class, offering an enriched language programme, was established at Mount Lawley Senior High School. A second special language school was proposed for Kent Street Senior High School in 1972.

The introduction of the specialist language classes highlights a second motivation for the establishment of Specialist Schools - an economic one. Not only were the needs of a particularly talented minority recognised but also the possibility of rationalising resources.

As Mossenson (1972) emphasises in his history of State education in W.A., the condition of State finances has always been a major factor in the provision of educational services and facilities. Thus, the move to establish Specialist Schools for foreign languages must be seen against the background of a decline in numbers of students electing to study languages in the upper school, resulting in a high proportion of uneconomic language classes. The Education Department faced the problem of justifying the provision of staff to offer a range of languages in all schools for very limited numbers of students. In fact, the Superintendent of Languages reports that when discussions of specialisation in languages began, it was originally planned to blanket the Metropolitan Area with seven such Specialist Schools and concentrate all language teaching in these.

The specialist language schools are, in fact, somewhat different in concept from the other Specialist Schools because they provide an enriched set of language offerings which are not restricted to a highly selected group of students.

That is, they are not just a provision for those with exceptional talents drawn from throughout the Metropolitan Area, but provide options, at all levels in the secondary school, for students with only reasonable ability or high interest in languages as well as for the talented. Such a range of options are not available in other schools.

One of the policies of the Education Department regarding the adoption of specialisation was to consider geographical locations which would offer the widest possible availability to all eligible students, particularly as the Specialist Schools could have intakes from outside their regular boundaries. Thus, the principle of establishing specialist centres north and south of the river was adopted as an initial means of providing reasonably equal access. Unfortunately, in attempting to establish a second specialist school for music, the Department had to meet the problems of special tutors employed from the ranks of professional musicians in the community who claimed to have difficulties in travelling to schools south of the river. The second Specialist Music School was thus established at Churchlands in 1972.

The principle of equitable geographical distribution was adhered to in the establishment of the second Specialist School for art/craft at Balcatta in 1974 and in the creation of specialist classes in dance/drama at John Curtin in 1972 and at Tuart Hill in 1975. Additional Specialist Schools for the study of foreign languages were established in 1973 at Governor Stirling Senior High School and in 1975 at Scarborough Senior High School.

In 1969 the Dettman Report advocated expansion of the subject areas considered for specialisation with a relatively small number of schools for the provision of specialisation for students with exceptional talents and skills in fields such as art/craft and music, and the specification of one in every two large secondary schools with specialist classes for both the gifted and the handicapped in core subjects. While the recommendations have been heeded in the cultural/recreational fields, the Department has been reluctant to venture into specialisation in the core area. Perhaps the Hollywood experience made its impact here. More importantly, perhaps teachers and administrators seem to see the core subjects as forming the backbone of adherence to the comprehensive principle. All students, they argue, should be offered the core subjects in their own schools, and individual differences should be catered for within the current provisions offered by the Achievement Certificate. Other specialisations seem to be acceptable because they do not involve compulsory studies and because the need for communal activity with people of like interest and ability is recognised.

Historically, then, the philosophy of education in Western Australia has changed from one of the provision of different forms of secondary education for students with different career prospects to one of comprehensive secondary education for all, with the provision of a full range of subjects to cover each of the knowledge, career, and cultural purposes for all students; a policy of the optimal education for all children. The establishment of specialist high schools has meant a move away from the notion of a range of similar comprehensive high schools open to all. The policy change is most obvious when the specialist provisions are exclusively for a selected group. The issue for this research project is to determine the community's opinion of how far the move should be taken.

1. See Discipline in Secondary Schools in Western Australia : Report of the Government Secondary Schools Discipline Committee, Perth The Education Department of Western Australia, 1972, p.18.

2. Mossenson D., State Education in Western Australia 1829 - 1960 Nedlands : University of Western Australia Press, 1972, p.156 Also : Discipline in Secondary Schools in Western Australia : Report of the Government Secondary Schools Discipline Committee, Perth : The Education Department of Western Australia, 1972 p.18.

3. Discipline in Secondary Schools in Western Australia : Report of the Government Secondary Schools Discipline Committee, Perth : The Education Department of Western Australia, 1972, p.29.

4. Education Department of Western Australia/Annual Report, 1967, p.26.

5. Education Department of Western Australia/Annual Report, 1969, p.17; 1970, p.15 : Also Education Department of Western Australia/Records File 692/68 : Special Courses in High Schools - Mathematics.

6. Secondary Education in Western Australia : Report of the Committee on Secondary Education appointed by the Minister for Education in Western Australia under the Chairmanship of Mr. H W Dettmen, Perth : The Education Department of Western Australia, February, 1969, pp.74 - 75.

CHAPTER 3

NATURE AND EXTENT OF CURRENT SPECIALISATION

3.1 CATEGORIES OF SPECIALISATION

The concept of "specialisation" covers a broad range of strategies and approaches to education. Taking the widest possible view, specialist school might be defined as one designed especially to provide for education in areas of:

1. specific need, whether it be physical, educational, social or emotional;
2. specialised interest;
3. specific talent, or
4. general academic ability

by means of:

1. organisational and/or administrative structure;
2. special facilities;
3. special programmes;
4. special learning patterns, or
5. selective entry procedures.

In any one school there might be a combination of any or all of these purposes and strategies for specialisation.

In Western Australian State Secondary Schools a wide variety of these approaches can be seen to exist under the broad umbrella of comprehensiveness. Thus, with regard to organisational and administrative structures it is possible to identify Metropolitan secondary schools which operate or have operated on a sub-schools or schools-within-schools system of vertical or horizontal divisions; schools which have been timetabled on a shift system to accommodate excessive numbers; or on a modular basis to introduce greater flexibility of student and teacher time in class contact and directed private study; others which focus upon an integration of curricula across year or total school levels; and so on. Programmes are observed to range from the full comprehensive approach with general educational course over a wide range of academic, commercial, technical, cultural and recreational subjects; through comprehensiveness with enrichment or enhancement in a specific area, for example Arts and Crafts, with either non-selective choice or selective streams. A wide range of special facilities exists, including specially qualified staff; teaching aides and assistants; technological resources in excess of general provisions; special building resources and special premises; and community inputs. The only major area of the possible range of specialisation not to be observed in Western Australian State Secondary Schools is the selective entry school for an academic or intellectual elite, for the generally very gifted. Selective schools do exist for the physically and severely intellectually handicapped.

Thus it can be seen that State secondary schools in Western Australia offer many "specialisms" across a broad range of programmes, facilities and organisational or administrative structures for the full range of interests and abilities. With regard to subject specialisation, under the Achievement Certificate system all schools offer a core of subjects seen as academically necessary (English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies), and a range of optional subjects, such as art, music, languages, etc, with a broad spectrum of other "Specialist" options which cater for local conditions or utilise local resources.

3.2 EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DEFINITIONS

As indicated in Chapter 2, the Director-General of Education lends his full support to schools wishing to diversify in the various categories of specialisation, including actual subject offerings. However, for the purposes of Departmental planning, budgeting, and records, a secondary school can claim to be Specialist only through the process of central Departmental initiative, or through a decision by the Department to give full official status and support to a special programme established through local initiative. Beyond this important definitional criterion of Specialist Schools as centrally initiated or recognised, the most important identifying characteristic of a Specialist School is the departure from adherence to the boundary system which ensures that children from primary schools in a defined geographical area will attend a particular local secondary school.

The Specialist Schools invite applications from students throughout the Metropolitan Area. Selection is generally based upon:

1. reports and recommendations from primary school principals or teachers;

2. particular talent or aptitude in the specialist subject measured by standardised tests (in Music and Languages) and/or non-standardised measures and observations (in Art/Craft and Dance/Drama);

3. demonstrated high level academic achievement and above average intellectual ability.

The primary definition of a Specialist School, then, is one which, by virtue of Departmental initiative or directive, offers the full range of subjects offered in other secondary schools together with an enrichment of one specialist subject which is offered to a selected stream of talented students who may come from any part of the Metropolitan Area, regardless of school boundaries.

A second category of specialisation is also recognised by the Department: "Specialist" important or major centres which offer enrichment for both selected and non-selected streams, but which do not generally have an intake from beyond local boundaries.

Lying between these two categories are the Specialist Language Schools which permit boundary crossing but which offer enriched language offerings to a wider ability range. Thus, it can be seen that apart from the various possible categories of specialisation, each recognised by the Education Department of Western Australia (except for the selective school for the generally gifted), and implemented in a variety of schools, the term "Specialist School" applies strictly to centres with specialisation in selected subjects, initiated centrally by the Department, and given official status.

The development of these different categories of specialism in the high schools has been motivated by considerations which are slightly different in different curriculum areas. In the case of music, and particularly instrumental music which was not taught in government high schools until the 1960s, there were insufficient specialist resources, human and physical, to provide a programme in all schools; if any substantial programmes were to be developed in the area, they could only begin in selected schools.

In other curriculum areas (such as ballet, and some of the traditionally less familiar languages such as Japanese and Indonesian) there was a limitation imposed by demand, as much as by resources; numbers of prospective students could not have justified the provision of courses in all schools. In general the development of specialist language schools was motivated by the desire to rationalise resources for language teaching. Traditionally French and German had been taught in most high schools, but the 1960s were marked by an increase in the numbers of languages being taught, and a decline in the proportion of the school population electing to study them. The response to this problem was to concentrate resources for the teaching of a wide range of languages in a few schools. leaving the others with modest language offerings.

3.3 CONTINUUM OF SUBJECT SPECIALISATION

Further examination of subject specialisation in Metropolitan secondary schools in Western Australia makes it clear that a continuum of specialisation - or acceptability of specialisation - exists within the Department. Figure 3.3.1 illustrates this. The "Arts" or "Cultural" areas in which we currently have specialisation on a highly selective basis appear to be awarded the greatest degree of acceptability. At the other end of the scale are the core subjects, specialisation in these subjects appears to be considered out of the question. A middle range of recreational, technical and academic enrichment areas seem to elicit a mixed reaction in terms of the notion of specialisation, and, where specialisation does exist in these areas, the concept does not appear to be so strictly selective.

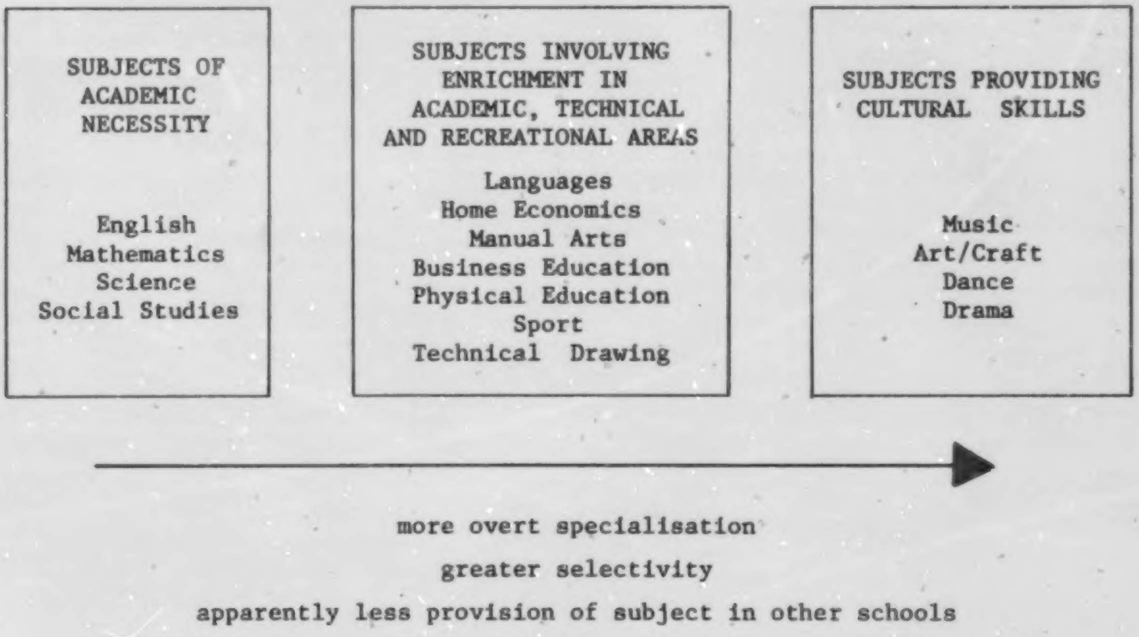
SUBJECTS OF ACADEMIC NECESSITY
English
Mathematics
Science
Social Studies
SUBJECTS INVOLVING ENRICHMENT IN ACADEMIC, TECHNICAL AND RECREATIONAL AREAS
Languages
Home Economics
Manual Arts
Business Education
Physical Education
Sport
Technical Drawing
SUBJECTS PROVIDING CULTURAL SKILLS
Music
Art/Craft
Dance
Drama
more overt specialisation
greater selectivity
apparently less provision of subject in other schools

FIGURE 3.3.1 CONTINUUM OF SUBJECT SPECIALISATION

3.4 EXISTING SPECIALIST SCHOOLS

Secondary Specialist Schools in the Metropolitan Area currently cater for talent and interest in music, art/craft, dance/drama and foreign languages. Table 3.4.1 shows the existing Departmental listing of Specialist Schools and major or important centres.

TABLE 3.4.1 EXISTING SPECIALIST SCHOOLS, MAJOR AND IMPORTANT CENTRES IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA

SPECIALIST SUBJECT	CATEGORY OF SPECIALISATION	SCHOOL
Art/Craft	Specialist School	Applecross Balcatta
music	Specialist School	Churchlands Perth Modern
	Important Centre	Armadale Governor Stirling John Forrest
dance/drama	Specialist School	John Curtin Tuart Hill
languages	Specialist School	Governor Stirling Kent Street Mount Lawley Scarborough
	Major Centre	Applecross Balcatta Churchlands (Governor Stirling) Hampton Hollywood John Curtin (Kent Street) (Mount Lawley) (Scarborough) Swanbourne

Note that, with the foreign language categorisation, four schools appear on both the Specialist and the Major Centre lists. This is due to the definition of major centre as a school offering three or more foreign languages. This distinction is one made for the purposes of Education Department planning and records and is not a well-published one. The distinction is included in this study because it has implications for definitions of specialisation and because it is important for later discussion of community awareness of specialisation.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

A major factor underlying the Director General's initiation of the Specialist Schools Study was a series of questions raised in conjunction with Departmental personnel. Discussions about specialisation led to the recognition that the Education Department lacked empirical evidence of the nature and extent of community attitudes toward specialisation and the question of choice of schools and courses in Western Australia. Moreover the issues and problems associated with various approaches to specialisation had not been documented in any organised fashion.

With this in mind, the Project Team considered it essential to carry out preliminary investigations to determine the precise nature of specialisation in Metropolitan State secondary schools in order to establish an adequate basis for the major facet of the study - the community survey. Such initial investigations were seen as an essential basis to the generation of appropriate questions and the definition of the community to be surveyed.

4.2. INITIAL INVESTIGATIONS

In order to determine the nature and extent of specialisation in secondary schools and the various implications of specialisation an extensive initial investigation involved:

1. An examination of the origins and aims of specialisation as perceived by various Departmental personnel and as recorded in Education Department Records, Reports and Publications.

2. A telephone survey of all Metropolitan State secondary schools aimed at establishing a picture of the status of music (as one example of a specialist subject) in each school. The telephone survey also offered school administrators the opportunity to comment upon the concept of specialisation and to raise issues which might be involved (see Appendix II).

3. Interviews and discussions with Departmental personnel and teacher groups to investigate issues and problems associated with various aspects of the concept of specialisation.

4. A Project Team interview with Dr. Mossenson to clarify his perceptions about specialisation and the Specialist Schools Project. Dr. Mossenson's viewpoint was considered a vital part of the initial investigation, not only because he had proposed the study, but also because of his involvement in the beginnings of Specialist School provisions when he was Director of Secondary Education.

4.3 INSTRUMENTATION

A questionnaire was designed as the survey instrument, with the aim of determining:

1. the nature and extent of community attitudes toward the possibility of parental choice with regard to schools attended and subjects studied at secondary level in the State Education system,

2. the degree to which the community is aware of existing specialisation,

3. community attitudes to existing specialisation,

4. community attitudes to other possible types of specialisation,

5. the nature of community reactions to various issues related to specialisation.

A pilot version of the instrument was administered through Hamilton Senior High School in September 1977, and the modified questionnaire distributed through the schools in November.

The Community Questionnaire: Following the first phase of investigations, an analysis of all preliminary research activities was carried out to generate a listing of questions for investigation in the community. In constructing the survey instrument, all records, reports, transcripts, and notes of interviews were thoroughly reviewed in an attempt to cover all relevant issues.

Preliminary questions were discussed and ordered by the Project Team. They were then reviewed in the light of a transcript of the interview with the Director-General. Careful attention was paid to each issue raised in that interview, to the extent that some items of the questionnaire contain verbatim excerpts.

The issues to be surveyed proved to be of such a nature as to require careful definition of the concepts to be explored and it was found that a good deal of information had to be presented to respondents before many of the questions could be raised. Every effort was made to limit the amount of reading required of respondents and to present the material in an acceptable style. Nevertheless, the complete questionnaire consisted of 40 items calling for 105 responses together with an open invitation to comment, covering 21 pages. It is possible, therefore, that the sheer bulk of the instrument and the difficulty involved in reading and understanding certain of the concepts presented may have served to diminish returns and possibly invalidate some of the responses. This must be kept in mind and caution be exercised in the interpretation of the results.

The community Questionnaire covered the following general areas of concern:

A. descriptive personal data (this enabled the Project Team to check the degree to which the sample community was representative of the population at large, and will enable an examination of the influence of geographic location and presence of specialisation in the local school upon community responses).

B. reactions to the issue of school and subject choice (this was aimed at determining whether parents would favour relaxation of the boundary system and the sorts of features and subjects which would influence the choices they would then possibly make),

C. awareness of specialisation (this section of the questionnaire allowed an examination of the degree to which the community is in fact aware of existing specialisation and the accuracy of their perceptions as to which schools were specialist. It was felt that any misconceptions held by the community would be of interest to the Education Department,

D. reactions to various forms of specialisation (in this section items covered the degree of support for existing forms of specialisation and reactions to alternative or additional forms which might be introduced in the future),

E. reactions to issues involved in specialisation (here the possible implications of specialisation were explored. The aim was to examine the way in which the various possible problems or outcomes associated with specialisation might influence the degree of support demonstrated in the previous section of the questionnaire).

The questionnaire was designed in such a way that the opinions of teachers could be incorporated in the analysis. All completed an identical questionnaire, teachers being asked for their perceptions of ideal parent responses. Additional information about length of service, teaching area and level, and experience with specialisation was sought from teachers. The Project Team considered teachers an important part of the "community" to be surveyed and was interested in the degree to which community attitudes were congruent with hopes expressed by teachers.

A copy of the research instrument is shown in Appendix I.

4.4 SAMPLING AND ADMINISTRATION

For ease of administration it was resolved to sample through the schools, approaching parents of Year 10 students and their neighbours (one on each side of the parents' home). This procedure allowed the Project Team to survey the opinions of parents of State secondary school children and additional members of the community in general (non-parents, parents of primary age children, parents of non-Government school pupils, and parents of children beyond school attendance age).

Sample:

The selection of the sample was based on two variables:

1. socioeconomic level of the community (in the neighbourhood of each school),

2. presence or absence of a specialist school in the community.

1. Socioeconomic Levels: After the elimination of new schools, (without upper year) State secondary schools were assigned to categories on the basis of subjective assessment of the predominant socioeconomic level of the neighbouring community: medium to high
   mixed
   low

This categorisation was checked against the results of John Sanders 1972 "Spatial Analysis of Socioeconomic Status in the Perth Metropolitan Area".

2. Specialist School in the Community: Schools were assigned to categories of specialisation on the basis of:

   music or art/craft
   language or dance/drama
   lack of specialisation

   (the Departmental listing of Specialist and major or important centres was used as the basis for this categorisation).

From the listing of schools derived in this way 12 schools were selected to form the sample, with an attempt to provide for a reasonably equitable distribution of schools on the basis of geographical location. Although a new school with no Year 10 population, Willetton was added to the sample because of its interest as an example of the newly created special category schools emphasising organisational innovation. Table 4.1.1 shows the way in which the two variables discussed above formed the basis of the sample. Numbers in each cell represent the ranking of each school (or equivalent) on the basis of Sanders (1972) spatial analysis (with 1-4 clearly representing high socioeconomic status, through to 50 representing lowest socioeconomic status).

Table 4.4.1: The Sample Schools, Showing Categorisation by Socioeconomic Level and Specialisation.

SOCIOECONOMIC LEVEL	SPECIALISATION		
	MUSIC ART/CRAFT	LANGUAGE DANCE/DRAMA	ABSENT
Middle/High	Applecross 4	Hollywood 3	City Beach 2
Mixed	Balcatta 32	Tuart Hill 17	Kalamunda 11
Mixed	John Forrest 19	Scarborough 13	Como 9
Low	Perth Modern 38	Hampton 39	Girrawheen 44

(together with Willetton)

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* Sanders J.M. A Spatial Analysis of Socio-economic Status in the Perth Metropolitan Area : Some Educational Implications. Education, 1972, pp.16 - 27.

Figure 4.1 shows the Location of sample schools in the Metropolitan Area.

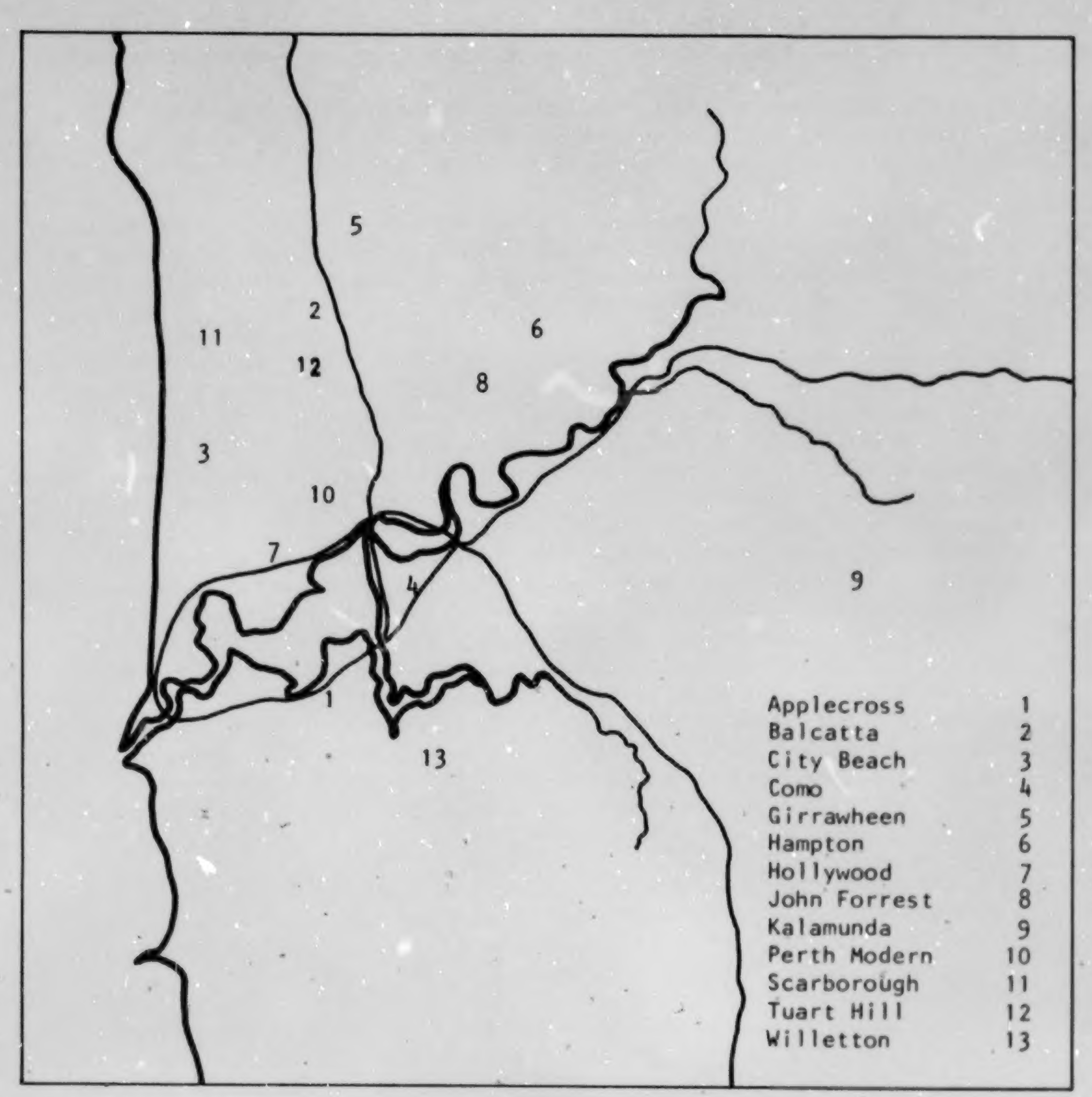

Figure 4.4.1 Geographical Distribution of Sample Schools

Alphabetical listings of school staff and year 10 students were then sampled to yield a total of 50 student names and 40 staff names for each school. The selection procedure was effectively randomised by the systematic selection of every nth name. The starting point for sampling was alternated between A and Z so that no possible bias was introduced through greater selection at either extreme of the alphabet. With each student taking home 3 questionnaires (one each to be completed by a parent and two neighbours), this yielded a sample of 150 community members for each school and a total community sample of 1,950. Teacher sample totalled 492, as the staff at Willetton did not number 40, the whole staff of 12 was approached.

Administration of Questionnaires:

School administrators assisted in the distribution of the questionnaires. An attempt was made to have respondents complete an overnight return of the Questionnaire. In most schools this was achieved without difficulty and with excellent returns. In others, however, the length of the instrument may have militated against immediate return, as many respondents took extra time to complete the questionnaire.

Confidentiality was stressed in the introduction to the questionnaire and reinforced by the provision of a blank envelope for distribution and return. The completed booklets could be sealed and returned to the school or directly to the Project Team.

The response rate in the general community was high. Of the sample of 1,950 parents and neighbours a total of 1,361 (70%) returned questionnaires which were completed satisfactorily. School by school the response rate ranged from 40% to 84%. Only one school returned less than 50% (see Table 4.4.2.) High non-response rates in some schools were attributed to overexposure to questionnaires (e.g. Hollywood, in part because of its close proximity to the University of W.A., and City Beach, where other Departmental questionnaires had been administered just prior to the Specialist Schools Study instrument). Fears of illiteracy in some areas of the community were expressed at the outset, but evidence of this as a contributory factor in non-response rates was minimal. Moreover, earlier concern over the length of the instrument was clearly unnecessary. Some respondents did comment upon the length of the questionnaire and the reading and thought involved: very few saw the questionnaire as a waste of time, and most were fully completed, many with comments; a number of respondents commented favourably on the detailed nature of the questionnaire and many welcomed the opportunity to voice their opinions and offer criticisms or suggestions.

It would seem that the community found the subject of the survey of sufficient interest and importance to respond readily. The overall 70% return on this questionnaire would seem to provide an accurate coverage of the opinions of community members.

Teacher responses totalled 358, a 73% return overall. Again only one school returned less than 50% and school by school response rates ranged from 43% to 95%. This range would again seem to reflect over-exposure to questionnaires in some areas, and also, in some cases no doubt reflects the commitment of teachers to examinations, marking, and other end-of-the-year activities. Table 4.4.3. shows a breakdown of teacher returns by school.

Table 4.4.2. Numbers and Percentages of Community Questionnaire Completed and Returned (By School)

(150 Administered in each school)

SCHOOL	NUMBER RETURNED	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Applecross	115	76.67
Balcatta	105	70.00
City Beach	60	39.33
Como	123	82.00
Girrawheen	95	63.33
Hampton	115	76.67
Hollywood	90	60.00
John Forrest	85	56.67
Kalamunda	112	74.67
Perth Modern	116	77.33
Scarborough	110	73.33
Tuart Hill	109	72.67
Willetton	126	84.00
TOTAL	1361	70.00

Table 4.3 Numbers and Percentages of Teacher Questionnaires Completed and Returned (By School)

(40 Administered in each school)

SCHOOL	TEACHER RETURNS	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Applecross	38	95.0
Balcatta	32	80.0
City Beach	17	42.5
Como	34	85.0
Girrawheen	33	82.5
Hampton	34	85.0
Hollywood	20	50.0
John Forrest	20	50.0
Kalamunda	34	85.0
Perth Modern	36	90.0
Scarborough	28	70.0
Tuart Hill	26	65.0
Willetton	6 (of 12)	50.0
TOTAL	358	73.0

4.5 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

As noted above the questionnaire was designed to cover a wide range of issues and questions. A wealth of information is contained in the data, but, in view of the nature of the questions asked by the Director-General and the purposes of the survey, simple descriptive statistical procedures have been utilised to handle the data. The primary aim in reporting the results of the data processing has been to display the evidence as clearly and as comprehensively as possible.

In interpreting the data, conclusions have been based largely on the consistency of the data and the patterns of similarities and differences which appear.

Caution must be exercised, however: for example, the fact that a majority of parents consistently support a particular form of specialisation does not establish the need or educational desirability for such a form of specialisation, though such may well exist. It has not been the purpose of this study to provide evidence other than community reactions. More research would be needed to establish the need and educational desirability of various features considered in this survey. On the other hand, the feeling among members of a community is an important factor in determining the success, or otherwise, of any venture. Empirical evidence of the opinions and perceptions of the community is of value to the Education Department in proposing to extend existing features or to introduce new ones in the secondary schools.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

As noted in Chapter 4, the primary aim in reporting the results of the data processing for the Specialist Schools Study has been to display the evidence as clearly and as comprehensively as possible.

Results are generally presented in tabular form indicating percentages of respondents using the various response categories for each item. When appropriate, tests of significance are reported to indicate differences between community and teacher samples in proportions of responses or between distributions of rankings.

5.1 SAMPLING CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics of the Community Sample

Questions in the first Section of the Questionnaire were designed to elicit descriptive information. The answers to these questions provide insight into the characteristics of the community surveyed.

Responses to the Community Questionnaire revealed that 43.2% of the respondents were males and 56.8% were females. The majority (84.6 %) were parents, with the average family size being 3 children. A substantial number (34.7%) of the respondents and their spouses (38.6%) were not of Australian birth. 65.3% of respondents were Australian, 20% were born in the United Kingdon, and 14.7% were of other nationalities.

The age distribution of the respondents reveals a clustering in the 31-50 age bracket (a total of 65% of respondents) reflecting the emphasis on a parent community. The relationship between the survey sample and the community at large was examined by checking against data for W.A. from the 1971 census,as 1976 census data was not available.

TABLE 5.1.1 SAMPLE AND POPULATION BY AGE

THE COMMUNITY SAMPLE		1971 W.A. CENSUS FIGURES	
AGE RANGE	PERCENTAGE	AGE RANGE	PERCENTAGE
Under 21	8.1	-	-
21 - 30	12.7	20 - 29	29.8
31 - 40	33.6	30 - 39	22.1
41 - 50	31.3	40 - 49	20.7
51 - 60	10.8	50 - 59	15.7
Over 60	3.5	60 - 69	11.8

Consideration of these figures reveals that, taking into account the bias to a parent population, a reasonable approximation with respect to age to the population at large was achieved in the survey sample.

With regard to occupational status, the majority of the sample fell within the middle range of a 9 - point classification (Congalton's (1969)* 7- point classification of status ranking of occupations, supplemented by two extra categories to cover student and retired respondents).

Of the total sample of 1361, 119 failed to respond to this item; there were no comments to indicate the possible reasons for this. Of the remaining 1242, 25.8% were categorised 5, encompassing occupations such as routine office workers, salesmen, tenant farmers and skilled workers such as electricians, printers, fitters. Table 5.1.2 shows the overall distribution of responses for each occupational category.

TABLE 5.1.2 PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS FALLING INTO VARIOUS OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES

CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS
1. (Top Level) Professional, Managerial	2.1
2. Office and Sales Workers, other professional and managerial	10.8
3. Large business owners, trained semi-professionals e.g. physiotherapist, nurse	17.4
4. Skilled workers, Top level clerical, e.g. electrician, own business, bank clerk	20.5
5. Clerical and general sales routine office workers skilled workers	25.8
6. Shop assistants, skilled workers such as painter, builder on wages	18.4
7. Semi skilled worker e.g. packer, barman	2.5
8. Retired	2.0
9. Student	0.5

N = 1242 Modal status = 4.4

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* Congalton A.A. Status and Prestige in Australia Cheshire 1969.

If the unemployed category is excluded from the State data (Western Australian Yearbook, 1977) comparison with the community sample indicates a reasonable approximation to the population at large, indicating that it might reasonably be inferred that the overall results of the Specialist Schools Study reflect the attitudes and opinions of the community in general. The State data is presented in Table 5.1.3.

TABLE 5.1.3 STATE DATA ON OCCUPATIONAL LEVELS

CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE OF W.A. POPULATION (Unemployed excluded)
Professional/Technical	7.0
Administrative/ Executive/Managerial	4.7
Clerical	10.6
Sales	5.8
Labourers/Trades	20.3
Transport workers	4.8
Other/Retired	8.2
Students	2.0
	N = 600,087

Descriptive data about the educational background of the respondents and their children was also collected. The majority of respondents (65.2%) together with their spouses (64.9%) had attended Government secondary schools. A substantial number (20.6%) had attended non-Government secondary schools. 3% of respondents claimed to have attended Specialist Schools, this number might be seen to be excessive in view of the fact that specialisation as defined in this Report, was not introduced until 1967. However, these respondents may have attended Perth Modern School when it catered for scholarship holders. Of the 1303 responding to this item 8.2% reported that they had not had secondary education.

A more detailed representation of the school background of respondents and their spouses is presented in Table 5.1.4.

TABLE 5.1.4 SCHOOL BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS AND SPOUSES

SCHOOL BACKGROUND	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF SPOUSES
No Secondary Schooling	8.2	11.0
Non-Government Secondary	20.6	19.6
Government Secondary	65.2	64.9
Government Specialist	3.0	2.0
Other	2.9	2.5
	N = 1303	N = 1138

More than 50% of parent respondents had children attending Government primary and/or secondary schools. Only 6% claimed that their children attended a Specialist School (these respondents may be those with children in the Specialist Streams - it was clear from later responses that many parents of students in the regular streams of Specialist Schools were unaware that their children were attending a Specialist School).

Characteristics of the Teacher Sample

Teachers were asked for descriptive data indicating length of service subject area, teaching level, and experience of specialisation, together with the same descriptive data provided by the community.

Responses to the teacher Questionnaire revealed that 54.4% of respondents were males, and 45.6% were females. 66.6% of the teachers were parents themselves. 70.9% were of Australian birth and 13.4% were United Kingdom born, leaving only small percentages of other nationalities.

The age distribution of teachers reflects a young teaching force with 43.3% in the 21 - 30 range, 35.4% in the 31 - 40 range and 12.5% in the 41 - 50 range. 7.9% were in the 51 - 60 range and 0.8% were over 60. This distribution closely approximates Education Department data for 1977 (see Estimated Demand for Additional Primary and Secondary Teachers for Government Schools 1979 - 1988, Education Department of W.A., Planning Branch, P. 18). Table 5.1.5 illustrates this.

TABLE 5.1.5 AGE DISTRIBUTION OF STATE SECONDARY TEACHERS

AGE RANGE	SURVEY SAMPLE	EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Under 21	0.0	0.1
21 - 30	43.3	49.1
31 - 40	35.4	29.1
41 - 50	12.5	13.9
51 - 60	7.9	6.2
Over 60	0.8	0.9

Distribution of teachers by length of service indicated an average of 10 years experience, with a range from 1 - 41 years. Modal responses were 4,5 and 10 years. The largest single group of teachers responding to the survey taught only in the lower school (46.9%), with 15.2% of teachers working with the whole range of secondary students.

The survey sample appears to be a broad representative sample of the total community of secondary teachers as indicated by the data outlined above and by the distribution of teachers by subject taught (see Table 5.1.6).

TABLE 5.1.6 DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER SAMPLE BY SUBJECT AREA

SUBJECT AREA	% OF TEACHER RESPONDENTS	SUBJECT AREA	% OF TEACHER RESPONDENTS
Art/Craft	4.7	Media Studies	0.9
Business Education	3.2	Music	1.2
Dance/Drama	0.3	Physical Education	7.0
English	12.9	Remedial	2.6
Languages	7.0	Science	14.7
Home Economics	6.5	Social Studies	13.5
Manual Arts	9.4	Technical Drawing	1.8
Mathematics	12.6	Youth Education	0.9

40.8% of teachers claimed to have taught in a Specialist School at some time in their service 11.4% responded "No" and 44.4% "Don't Care" when asked if they would like to teach in a Specialist School.

Overall Assessment

It is evident from these figures that the sampling strategies used produced samples of community and teachers that reasonably reflected population characteristics, and that the non-response rate did not distort these samples to any significant extent.

The sample is unashamedly biased towards parents - a deliberate emphasis reflecting the need to survey the range of opinion of the major consumers of the educational enterprise.

5.2 AVAILABILITY AND CRITERIA OF CHOICE

While there is at present only minimal formal provision within the State School system for parental choice of secondary school, information was sought regarding the degree to which parents would like to have a choice and the sorts of features which would influence their choices. This section of the Questionnaire was aimed at determining the importance of the boundary system and the types of specialisation, if any, which might encourage boundary crossing.

More than 75% of the community and teachers surveyed answered in the affirmative when asked whether they would prefer choice rather than the restrictions of a boundary system. The nature of the question was such that a sizeable "Yes" response could be anticipated (one would expect a preference for choice). Of interest in this question, however, is the number of respondents indicating, through "No" and "Don't Care" responses, that they did not particularly want a choice, although "No" cannot be interpreted as a vote to impose the the boundary system.

Table 5.2.1. shows the percentages of teachers and community responding to each alternative response category.

TABLE 5.2.1. RESPONSES TO Q. 9

"Would you prefer to be allowed to choose any Government secondary school rather than be restricted by a boundary system?"

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
YES	75.7	79.4
NO	17.2	15.8
DON'T CARE	7.0	4.8
	N = 1334	N = 355

It is clear from the responses in this Table that, given the possibility of boundary relaxation, a large majority of teachers and community members would opt for choice, and that a small percentage of each sample is apparently content to have the specification of schools to be attended by their children left to the Education Department, or may be concerned by some of the implications of relaxing boundaries.

* * *

If boundary relaxation were to become a possibility, what sorts of features would influence people in their choice of secondary schools? In question 10 respondents were asked to rank a list of features from 1, having most importance for choice to 14, for the least important possible influence on choice. Table 5.2.2 summarises the responses. Median rankings are presented and the features are arranged in order of importance to the community.

TABLE 5.2.2. IMPORTANCE OF FEATURES IN INFLUENCING CHOICE

"If the Education Department allowed you to choose to send your children to any State secondary school, what sort of things would you take into account in making your choice?"

FEATURE	COMMUNITY RANKING (MEDIAN)	TEACHER RANKING (MEDIAN)
Academic standards	1.7	1.6
Standards of discipline	3.1	3.3
* Range of subjects offered	3.3	3.8
*** Convenience of transport	6.9	8.2
*** Friendly school atmosphere	7.2	5.7
Reputation of the school in the Community	7.2	7.6
* Facilities such as Library/ Swimming Pool	7.8	7.0
Special strength in particular subjects e.g. Music, Art/Craft Languages	7.9	7.6
*** Continuity of subjects from primary school	8.2	10.8
** Sporting facilities	8.4	9.1
"Home room" or other groupings with special staff to look after students' interests	9.0	9.8
*** Size of school	10.8	6.9
*** Quality of buildings	11.0	9.8
*** Insistence on school uniforms	12.5	13.5

* Difference between distributions of community and teacher rankings significant at 0.05 level

** Significant at 0.01 level

*** Significant at 0.001 level

(Tests of significance used in this Chapter compare teacher rank distributions with community rank distributions using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test or, in the case of YES/NO answers, teacher percentages and community percentages, using a Fisher Test between uncorrelated proportions. Readers one reminded that statistical differences do not necessarily reflect differences of policy-making significance. Guilford JP Fundamental Statistics in Psychology Education 4th Edition McGaw-Hill 1965.)

The overall rankings are remarkably similar for community and teachers. Academic standards, standards of discipline, and the range of subjects offered assume greatest importance as a basis of choice for both groups. The community concurs with teachers in ranking insistence on school uniforms the least important feature of those listed which might influence choice of secondary school.

A point about the responses to this question needs to be stressed, because it affects the interpretation of some subsequent responses. Neither the general community nor the teachers would give a high priority to the provision of special resources in some curriculum area, in choosing a high school for their children; this factor falls in the middle of the rank order. Predictably it falls behind general academic standards and discipline, but significantly it also falls behind the range of options offered. That is, most people, offered the chance to choose between schools, would look for a wide range of subject offerings before they would look for special strength in any particular subject.

Responses to later questions need to be read in the light of this response if a clear view is to be kept of the place of subject specialisation in the educational priorities of the community. In particular it is clear that the responses to questions 11 to 15 may not be interpreted as expressing general willingness for the development of specialities in some schools at the expense of the range of subject choice in others.

In order to assess these results more accurately it is necessary to examine the distribution of ranks for each feature. Appendix III contains figures showing frequency distributions of percentages of respondents using each rank for each of the features listed.

In many cases the whole range of ranking categories was used for each feature. However, clustering in the extremes was evident for some features (e.g. for academic standards responses by both teachers and community members clustered at the most important end of the scale) making the median rankings clearly representative of the results. For other features an almost even use of the whole range was evident, (e.g. community ranking of school reputation), so that the median ranking reported fails to reflect the overall results adequately. Such wide even ranking might indicate no real clarity in the minds of respondents for these features or may be a result of the measurement technique which required the use of all ranking categories from 1 through 14, so that extreme responses are more likely to be accurate representations of the community's perceptions.

* * *

Question 11 dealt with respondents' preferences for maintaining the same range of subjects at similar levels in all schools or for having special strengths in particular subject areas.

TABLE 5.2.3 RESPONSES TO Q. 11

"Would you prefer all secondary schools to do the same range of subjects at about the same average level, or would you favour some schools having special strengths in particular subject areas?"

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
*** Same range of subjects in all schools	43.7	30.1
*** Schools with special strengths in some subjects	56.3	69.9
	N = 1330	N = 349

*** P<001

The notion of schools with special strengths is favoured by both groups but community members are more inclined to express a preference for the same range of subjects in all schools than are teachers.

* * *

Given the idea of special strengths, respondents were then asked to rank an alphabetical listing of various subjects according to the importance they would assume in the process of making a choice between different schools. Median rankings are shown in Table 5.2.4. Subjects are ranked in order of importance to the community.

TABLE 5.2.4 RESPONSES TO Q. 12

"Suppose that special subject strengths were found in secondary schools. Which subjects would be most important to you in making a choice between different schools?"

SPECIAL SUBJECT STRENGTH	MEDIAN RANK	
	COMMUNITY	TEACHERS
*** English	1.6	2.3
*** Mathematics	2.1	3.1
* Science	4.1	4.1
Social Studies	5.1	5.3
*** Business Education	5.4	9.1
*** Foreign Languages	8.1	6.1
*** Home Economics	8.8	10.8
* Physical Education	9.0	9.8
Manual Arts	9.6	9.7
*** Sport	10.0	11.1
*** Technical Drawing	10.1	12.3
*** Art/Craft	10.2	7.1
*** Media Studies	10.3	9.0
*** Music	10.6	6.5
*** Dance/Drama	12.7	9.5
N	1220	335

* Significant at $P < 0.05$

*** Significant at $P < 0.001$

This table, together with an examination of the distribution of rankings for each subject (see Appendix III), indicates a clear statement by both community members and teachers as to the importance of strengths in the core subjects: English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies, in that order. Music and Dance/Drama are rated low. One respondent reports that "the performing arts are only pastimes for relaxation".

Teacher and community rankings are remarkably similar for almost all subjects. Thus, teachers perceptions of the ideal responses of parents are matched by observed community rankings. Major departures from this pattern of similarities are community rankings of Business Education as clearly very important as a basis for choice as opposed to the teacher ranking of this subject as ideally less important. On the other hand music and art/craft constitute much more important choice factors in the view of teachers than they do for the community.

* * *

When respondents were invited to give their reasons for the rankings made in Q. 12, the most frequently mentioned reason related to the fact that subjects ranked most important were co-requisite subjects, adequate performance in these being essential for other studies. One example of such comment is "I believe English and Mathematics are essential and a basic requirement for all other subjects".

TABLE 5.2.5 RESPONSES TO Q. 13

"What influenced your ordering of the subjects in Q. 12?"

REASON	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
* Co-requisite subjects	27.2	21.2
*** Preparation for future vocation	22.5	12.8
Preparation for future life	17.3	15.8
** Repetition of question	8.7	14.0
Preparation for future education	6.6	6.6
* Enrichment of present life	6.2	15.5
*** Catering for individual needs	5.2	11.0
* Unique to particular child	4.8	2.7
Provision of subject/s outside school	1.6	0.3
N	1220	335

* $P < 0.05$
** $P < 0.01$
*** $P < 0.001$

A response in the category "Repetition of question" was one which indicated that subjects were ordered as they were because the respondent considered them important. In other words, such a response simply repeated the question, without giving a reason.

From Table 5.2.5 it can be seen that the similar rankings by teachers and community members are attributed to similar reasons, both groups being clearly oriented to the career and knowledge purposes of education, and the importance of co-requisite subjects assumes priority for both teachers and community members. There is a strong feeling running through the comments that the "core" subjects provide the key to career, further education and quality of life.

Differences between the two groups are evident in the far greater emphasis given to preparation for the work force by community members. Teachers would hope for more emphasis on selections based upon enrichment of present life and catering for individual needs. Note the tendency for a larger proportion of teachers than community members, to simply repeat the question. Perhaps teachers are more prone to "take for granted" the importance of the core subjects.

* * *

Question 14 raised the possibility that with specialisation it might not be possible to offer all subjects in all schools and that some subjects might be seen by the community to be expendable. Respondents were asked to rank the same alphabetical list presented for Question 12, this time ranking from the subject the schools could most reasonably do without (at 1) through to 15 as the least expendable subject.

TABLE 5.2.6 RESPONSES TO Q 14

"If the provision of special strengths in certain subjects meant that some other schools would not have these subjects, which subjects do you consider the schools could do without?"

SUBJECT	MEDIAN RANK	
	COMMUNITY	TEACHERS
*** Dance/Drama	2.4	3.2
** Media Studies	5.0	4.0
** Music	5.0	6.2
*** Art/Craft	5.4	6.9
*** Technical Drawing	6.1	4.3
Foreign Languages	6.8	5.8
Home Economics	6.9	7.5
*** Manual Arts	6.9	8.3
** Sport	7.0	6.1
*** Business Education	9.5	5.8
Physical Education	8.0	9.0
*** Social Studies	10.9	11.8
*** Science	12.1	12.3
*** Mathematics	13.9	13.4
*** English	14.4	14.7

** $P < 0.01$

*** $P < 0.001$

In keeping with the responses to Q. 12, core subjects are ranked, as least expendable. Business Education also gets the same strong support from the community as seen previously.

While the trends in ranking are similar to those seen in Question 12, a complete reversal is not evident. This supports the inclusion of this second difficult ranking item: ranking subjects on the degree of influence they might have in decision-making about which secondary school to attend is not the exact reverse of ranking subjects in terms of their perceived expendability. Many respondents, in fact, commented that they considered no subject expendable, reinforcing the importance placed upon the range of options in answering question 10. An example of such comment was "A school should give the opportunity for all students to experience all of these subjects, therefore I consider all to be equal". (For a more detailed analysis of the rankings of expendability of each subject, see Appendix III).

* * *

In response to a further request to give their reasons for ranking the subjects as they did in Question 14, both parents and teachers attributed provision of a subject outside school (in homes, other agencies) as the most compelling reason for viewing a subject as being expendable, (if at all).

TABLE 5.2.7 RESPONSES TO Q. 15

"We are also interested in your reasons for considering that some schools could possibly do without certain subjects.
Although you have given some indication of the reasons for the importance of different subjects in making a choice between schools, different things may come to mind when you think about the schools doing without certain subjects".

	REASON	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
	Provision of subject/s outside school	21.9	22.6
***	Preparation for vocation	17.8	9.7
	Repetition of question	16.8	17.2
*	Co-requisite subjects	13.9	9.4
	Preparation for future life	10.1	11.3
***	Catering for individual needs	9.0	15.7
***	Enrichment for present life	4.8	11.0
	Preparation for future education	3.2	2.8
**	Unique to particular child	2.4	0.3
	N	1104	351

* $P < 0.05$
** $P < 0.01$
*** $P < 0.001$

The teacher emphasis on enrichment of present life and provision for individual differences as opposed to the community's greater emphasis on vocation is again evident in the thinking of respondents. "There is enough unemployed artists and such like around. Arts and Crafts etc. may express the individual but in many cases do not feed the family or help the community". The main theme, however, is that in many of the lower rated areas provision can be made outside the school for adequate education. Community members also continue to think in terms of co-requisite subjects when they assess the expendability of a wide range of subjects. It is also clear from the responses in this table that a sizeable proportion of both teacher and community groups were unable to articulate reasons for their rankings and simply repeated the question in one form or another.

5.3 AWARENESS OF SPECIALISATION

Section C of the Questionnaire looked briefly at the degree to which the community was aware of specialisation in the schools and sought to obtain from respondents claiming to be aware of specialisation, a listing of schools perceived to be Specialist, with the subject in which they provided specialist studies. (The major or important centre categorisation was included as correct perception of specialisation.)

While 96% of teacher respondents claimed awareness of specialisation, only 59.4% of community members, only a little over half of the sample, were aware of the existence of Specialist Schools prior to answering the Questionnaire. This difference is significant at the 0.001 level (see Table 5.3.1) Note that teacher perceptions cannot here be interpreted as ideal parent responses. They have been included to indicate the degree of awareness in the teaching force.

TABLE 5.3.1 RESPONSES TO Q. 16

"Did you know, before answering this questionnaire, that these special features existed in some schools?"

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
YES	59.4	96.0
NO	40.6	4.0
N	1309	350

* * *

Table 5.3.2. shows the percentages of teacher and community responses to the listing of schools requested in Q. 17.

TABLE 5.3.2 PERCENTAGES OF CORRECT AND INCORRECT RESPONSES TO Q. 17

> "If you answered YES to Q. 16, could you name some schools which offer special streams or special strengths? Please list in the Table below the names of the schools and the subject areas in which they specialise".

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS LISTED CORRECTLY	NUMBER OF CORRECT RESPONDENTS	
	COMMUNITY	TEACHERS
1	192	48
2	173	65
3	133	86
4	75	52
5	16	31
6	10	18
7	4	11
8	3	3
9		1

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS LISTED INCORRECTLY	NUMBER OF INCORRECT RESPONDENTS	
	COMMUNITY	TEACHERS
1	153	86
2	41	21
3	6	3
4	1	2
5		3

All community members who claimed awareness of specialisation named at least one school correctly. Teachers were significantly ($P < 0.001$) more able to list larger numbers of schools correctly. Most frequently listed in this category were Perth Modern School and Applecross.

On the other hand, it is clear from the table that a large percentage of community members and teachers hold mistaken views about at least one school; the percentage of respondents naming two specialist school incorrectly is also high. Hollywood featured most frequently in the incorrect category, being perceived as a specialist Mathematics School

4. REACTIONS TO VARIOUS FORMS OF SPECIALISATION

Section D of the Questionnaire sought repondents' appraisals of the desirability of various forms of specialisation. Questions related in turn to: The existing specialist school concept (Q.18), the existing special strength schools (Q.19), schools for the generally bright (Q. 20), consortia of schools (Q.21), all age schools (Q.22), schools with different learning patterns (Q.23), vocational school (Q.24), and special offerings outside school hours (Q. 25).

Question 18 explored the degree of support for the existing Specialist School with a selected stream incorporating students from outside the normal boundaries.

TABLE 5.4.1 RESPONSES TO Q. 18

"Please indicate your feelings by placing
a tick (✓) in the appropriate box for
each type of specialist school listed below:"

FORM OF SPECIALISATION	HIGHLY DESIRABLE		DESIRABLE		UNDESIRABLE		HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE	
	Community (%)	Teachers (%)	Community (%)	Teachers (%)	Community (%)	Teachers (%)	Community (%)	Teachers (%)
Selective School with Art/Craft	25.8	41.6	58.1	43.6	12.4	12.3	3.7	2.3
Selective school with Music Speciality	30.8	48.7	52.6	38.2	13.2	10.3	3.4	2.6
Selective school with Dance/Drama Speciality	18.7	35.9	56.9	45.9	19.0	15.1	5.2	2.8

(Community/teacher differences all significant at $p < 0.001$ for each form of specialisation)

It can be seen from this table that there is a considerable degree of support for selective specialisation in the cultural/recreational areas, with teachers tending to give ideally stronger support than community members actually gave (greater use of the "highly desirable" response). What is also apparent, however, is that a number of teachers and community members find the notion of selective specialisation undesirable.

* * *

Question 19 sought data on the support for the major or important centre approach where special strengths exist to cater for a generally non-restricted group. This concept gained even stronger support than the selective specialist school, but there is, again, a sizeable proportion of "undesirable" responses.

TABLE 5.4.2 RESPONSES TO Q. 19

"Please indicate your feelings about the desirability of such schools by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box for each specialist school in the Table below:"

FORM OF SPECIALISATION	HIGHLY DESIRABLE		DESIRABLE		UNDESIRABLE		HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE	
	Community (%)	Teachers (%)	Community (%)	Teachers (%)	Community (%)	Teachers (%)	Community (%)	Teachers (%)
Special strength in Music	30.1	50.6	54.5	39.5	12.5	8.5	3.0	1.4
Special strength in Languages	39.0	49.6	50.2	39.9	8.3	8.5	2.6	2.0

(Teacher and community differences signigicant at $p < 0.005$ for both forms).

* * *

The activities of a Committee examining educational provisions for the Gifted Child and the press coverage of recent claims for the needs of the generally gifted in the community, raised the question of Specialist Schools for the very bright child, and led to the inclusion of Q. 20.

TABLE 5.4.3 RESPONSES TO Q. 20

"How desirable do you think it might be for the Education Department to create a Specialist school or a school with a Specialist stream for the very bright child?"

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
HIGHLY DESIRABLE	43.6	42.8
DESIRABLE	32.7	22.7
UNDESIRABLE	17.9	22.1
HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE	5.8	12.5
	N = 1286	N = 353

The notion of separate specialist provision for the generally gifted received strong support from both teachers and community members, over 40% seeing this as highly desirable. The community is more inclined than teachers would view as ideal to perceive Specialist Schools for the gifted as desirable ($p < 0.005$). The number of teachers looking to this proposal as one which should be perceived undesirable is nevertheless a sizeable proportion of the teacher sample.

* * *

One proposal which has been discussed in the Education Department is the creation of consortia of schools, offering a range of subject strengths. Enlarged boundaries would allow access to the various schools in the consortium, each of which would offer different subject strengths. Invited to indicate their feelings about such a system, community members responded with a high degree of support for the notion, and most teachers saw this support as ideal. Table 5.4.4 shows the percentages for each response category.

TABLE 5.4.4 RESPONSES TO Q. 21

"Please indicate your feelings about the desirability of such a consortium system by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box:"

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
HIGHLY DESIRABLE	36.1	40.4
DESIRABLE	47.7	41.0
UNDESIRABLE	12.9	14.4
HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE	3.3	4.2
	N = 1296	N = 354

* * *

Question 22 was designed to explore community reactions to an alternative administrative structure such as the all-aged school providing continuity and integration of primary and secondary curricula and specialist teaching.

Table 5.4.5 indicates a degree of ambivalence amongst community members and teachers alike, with teachers being slightly more inclined to take a positive view of the concept as ideal ($p < 0.001$). More than 50% of each group saw the all-age school as undesirable.

TABLE 5.4.5 RESPONSES TO Q. 22

"Please indicate by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box below how desirable you consider the development of such all-age schools in the Metropolitan Area."

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
HIGHLY DESIRABLE	16.7	10.8
DESIRABLE	29.6	22.2
UNDESIRABLE	38.7	45.0
HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE	15.1	21.9
	N = 1295	N = 351

* * *

A division amongst community members and amongst teachers is again evident when the question of different learning patterns is raised. The Department's recent support for the development of schools with a range of variations from traditional learning patterns was shared by only a little more than half of the community. A sizeable proportion found the idea undesirable and even highly undesirable. There was no significant differences between observed community responses and teachers ideal perceptions except for the "highly desirable" category. Table 5.4.6 summarises these responses.

TABLE 5.4.6 RESPONSES TO Q. 23

"Please indicate by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box below whether you consider it desirable for the Education Department to develop a range of schools which vary in this way."

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
HIGHLY DESIRABLE	17.6	22.8
DESIRABLE	39.2	37.0
UNDESIRABLE	32.7	30.2
HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE	10.5	10.0
	N = 1293	N = 351

* * *

The idea of vocational schools receives a very high degree of support from both community members and teachers. More than 85% of both respondent groups perceived the development of vocational schools to be desirable or highly desirable. However, the community is significantly more inclined ($p < 0.005$) than teachers to rate these in the desirable categories. These responses tie in with the strong statements indicating adherence to a view of education as having predominantly knowledge and career purposes (see page 31). Response percentages are shown in Table 5.4.7.

TABLE 5.4.7 RESPONSES TO Q. 24

"Please indicate by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box below how desirable you think it might be to develop such vocational schools in Perth Metropolitan Area."

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
HIGHLY DESIRABLE	63.3	55.0
DESIRABLE	30.4	38.2
UNDESIRABLE	4.1	5.1
HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE	2.2	1.7
	N = 1300	N = 353

* * *

The degree of support for special offerings outside the school in the form of camps, excursions, seminars, etc, as a means of catering for students' talents and interests was examined in Q. 25. Over 90% of both respondent groups used the desirable categories for this question with more than 50% of teachers indicating a judgement that this idea should be considered highly desirable (see Table 5.4.8).

TABLE 5.4.8 RESPONSES TO Q. 25

"Please indicate by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box below how desirable you think it might be for the Education Department to provide a wide offering of such camps, Saturday morning classes, etc."

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
HIGHLY DESIRABLE	46.0	55.0
DESIRABLE	44.5	38.2
UNDESIRABLE	7.2	5.1
HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE	1.7	2.3
	N = 1300	N = 353

These results conform to those opinions expressed in Q. 15, supporting the provision of special classes outside school hours.

* * *

The community was invited to indicate what they considered to be the best way of providing for students with special talents and interests. Table 5.4.9 summarises their responses.

TABLE 5.4.9 RESPONSES TO Q. 26

"What do you consider to be the best way to provide for the needs of students with special talents and interests? Please indicate your feelings by placing a tick (✓) against one of the alternatives listed below. Tick the most suitable alternative."

TYPE OF PROVISION	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
Specialist offerings in the schools	13.5	10.5
A wide offering of camps, Saturday classes, etc, to take the place of specialist offerings in the schools	17.4	11.3
Specialist offerings in the schools plus camps, etc.	68.6	77.6
	N = 1279	N = 344

As might be expected the alternative considered most suitable by both groups was that which offered the greatest provision. However, a strong response is also seen in favour of each of the other alternatives, with a greater number of community members than teachers inclined to favour these unitary sorts of provisions.

* * *

At the end of Section D, having reacted to a variety of different forms of specialisation, respondents were invited to place themselves in the position of deciding future planning for specialisation. A summary of their ranked priorities is presented in Table 5.4.10. This Table shows median rankings for each type of specialisation.

TABLE 5.4.10 RESPONSES TO Q. 27

"Suppose you were in a position to decide the future directions the Education Department should take with regard to specialisation in the Secondary Schools. Given the restricted finances and resources you might have to consider because of budget pressures, which of the various types of specialisation mentioned in this Section would you give priority?"

TYPE OF SPECIALISATION	MEDIAN RANK COMMUNITY	 TEACHERS
Vocational school	3.0	3.0
School with special strength	3.1	2.7
Consortium of schools	3.2	2.7
School with selected specialist stream	3.4	3.4
School with different learning patterns	4.8	5.0
Out-of-school specialisation in camps, etc	5.3	5.1
All Age Schools	6.2	6.6
N	1236	345

An examination of total distributions of rankings is necessary to determine whether the above results accurately reflect actual rankings. From these distributions (see AppendixIII) it is evident that both community and teachers perceive a priority for the development of vocational school, schools with special strengths and the consortium system, with the all-age concept clearly receiving the lowest priority. These rankings reflect the degree of support offered for the various types of specialisation explored in Section D and indicate a high degree of reliability in respondents' perceptions.

5. PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN SPECIALISATION

While it was not the intention of the Education Department, in creating Specialist Schools, to provide for talented students at the expense of others, or to create difficulties for the talented students themselves, reviews of records and reports, together with discussion with school personnel and Education Department administrative staff, revealed a number of possible problems and issues of concern which appeared important in any consideration of community attitudes toward specialisation. Teacher and community responses to questions about a variety of these issues and problems are outlined below. The issues were as follows; loss of subject offerings in "ordinary" schools (Q. 28), Travel (Q. 29, Q. 30), time costs (Q. 31, Q. 32), loss of talent in ordinary schools (Q. 34), continuity primary/secondary (Q. 35) and elitism (Q. 36).

The first question in this Section sought community reactions to the possible loss of subject offerings in some schools as a result of efforts to build strengths in Specialist Schools. Although every effort would be made to avoid such a consequence it is evident that economic viability and effective utilisation of teacher expertise must play an important part in the development of any Education Department programmes.

TABLE 5.5.1 RESPONSES TO Q. 28

"Would you be willing to accept the fact that some schools might lose subject offerings so that specialist schools could build strengths?"

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
YES	37.5	40.2
NO	57.8	56.9
DON'T CARE	4.6	2.8
	N = 353	N = 1300

There is again an expression of general unwillingness to accept erosion of subject choice in the "ordinary" schools with no sharp difference between teacher and community responses to this question.

* * *

Questions 29 and 30 raised the question of transport: With boundary crossing as a characteristic of Specialist Schools extensive travel can be a consequence of selection. Tables 5.5.2 and 5.5.3 show the percentages of teachers and community responding to each alternative.

TABLE 5.5.2 RESPONSES TO Q. 29

"Would you be willing to have your child catch one or more buses over long distances each morning and afternoon with possible lengthy waiting time between connections?"

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
YES	24.8	29.8
NO	73.0	67.6
DON'T CARE	2.2	2.6
	N = 1294	N = 352

It is apparent that there is quite widespread agreement, particularly amongst community members ($p < 0.03$) that the possible travel costs (in terms of time and distance), are not acceptable, if public transport is to be used.

However, when asked whether they would be willing to provide transport themselves, more than 75% of the community answered in the affirmative and the teachers perceptions were not significantly different. Table 5.5.3 indicates the percentage of respondents in each category.

TABLE 5.5.3 RESPONSES TO Q. 30

"Would you be willing to provide transport yourself?"

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
YES	78.2	81.0
NO	20.5	17.6
DON'T CARE	1.3	1.4
	N = 1296	N = 353

This suggests that travel would not be a significant barrier to most children's attendance at Specialist Schools.

* * *

A major area of concern expressed by administrators in Specialist Schools was the scheduling of specialist subjects so that other subjects were not missed. Moreover, the nature of most existing specialities means a commitment to out-of-school activities in the specialist area. Questions 31 and 32 explored reactions to these consequences of specialisation.

TABLE 5.5.4 RESPONSES TO Q. 31

"Would you be willing to have your child attend extra studies out of school hours to meet the requirements of a specialist subject?"

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
YES	76.6	84.7
NO	21.5	13.6
DON'T CARE	1.7	1.8
	N = 1296	N = 353

Teachers were hopeful of a strong affirmative response, which was given by community members, but a significantly higher percentage of the community was more inclined to reject out-of-school studies in specialist areas ($p < 0.001$).

TABLE 5.5.5 RESPONSES TO Q. 32

"Would you be willing to have your child miss class time in some school subjects in order to take specialist studies?"

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
YES	52.5	50.4
NO	46.0	48.1
DON'T CARE	1.5	1.4
	N = 1288	N = 351

Both community and teachers appear to be fairly evenly divided in their opinions on this question. Approximately equal numbers of community members express willingness as opposed to unwillingness to see their children miss class time in order to take specialist studies. This is not significantly different from teachers' perception of the ideal reaction.

With specialisation, the issue of boundary crossing and selection on the basis of talent and academic ability raises the question of possible loss of talent to non-specialist schools.

Question 33 explored community and teacher perceptions of this problem.

TABLE 5.5.6 RESPONSES TO Q. 33

"Suppose your child went to a non-specialist school from which talented students left to go to various specialist schools: Would you be concerned that the loss of those talented students would affect the schools' standards and tone?"

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
YES	42.8	64.9
NO	52.3	32.9
DON'T CARE	5.0	2.3
	N = 1286	N = 353

It is apparent that a large percentage of teachers is concerned in this regard; they would expect the loss of talented students to influence the standards and tone of a non-specialist school. The community, on the other hand, is more inclined ($p < 0.001$) to be fairly evenly divided on this question, with the 5% "don't care" responses weighting the community perceptions towards a lack of concern.

* * *

Some administrators and teachers expressed concern that the introduction of specialisation at the commencement of secondary school, with selection of students taking place in Year 7, necessitates decision-making which may be imposed at too early an age. Community members and teachers were in strong agreement that this was the case, with more than 70% of respondents in each group expressing this view. Table 5.5.7 illustrates the distribution of responses to Q. 34.

TABLE 5.5.7 RESPONSES TO Q. 34

"Students who attend Specialist Schools are often required to make a choice of speciality in Year 7 in the Primary school, before they move into High School.
Do you think this is too early for a child to make decision about the future directions he will take in his studies?"

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
YES	76.9	74.1
NO	22.4	24.8
DON'T CARE	0.8	0.9
	N = 1297	N = 351

Note that the percentage of "don't care" responses is considerably less than for previous questions. It is apparent that respondents are quite clear in the perceptions of this issue as a "yes" or "no" issue.

* * *

The telephone survey of the status of music in all Metropolitan secondary schools together with an examination of Education Department subject speciality listings for all Metropolitan schools (primary or secondary) raised the question of continuity of studies with the transition from primary to secondary school (see Appendix II).

TABLE 5.5.8 RESPONSES TO Q. 35

> "Suppose your child attended a primary school with a strong programme in a certain subject (e.g. music), but was unable to continue that programme in the High School because staff and resources were allocated to specialist schools.
> How would you react to the situation?"

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
ACCEPTABLE	30.7	20.1
UNACCEPTABLE	64.9	76.4
DON'T CARE	4.4	3.4
	N = 1301	N = 348

Teachers are more inclined ($p < 0.001$) to consider the situation unacceptable, but the majority of community members do respond this way. While the majority of respondents would find a lack of continuity of specialisation unacceptable, a significant number consider the situation acceptable; this is particularly true of community members.

* * *

The question of "elitism" is one which always seems to arise in any consideration of "special" provisions for selected groups in the population. Question 35 was aimed at exploring this issue.

Surprisingly, for a society with professedly strong egalitarian principles, teachers and community members were in strong agreement that selection was not socially undesirable. Table 5.5.9 shows the percentages of respondents for each alternative to this question.

TABLE 5.5.9 RESPONSES TO Q. 36

"Do you feel that selection of students on the basis of special talent or skill is socially undesirable?"

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
YES	30.4	31.8
NO	66.1	65.3
DON'T CARE	3.5	2.9
	N = 1298	N = 346

* * *

A final important issue with regard to specialisation is the perception of parents as to their children's eligibility for Specialist School placement and the degree to which they consider their children should attend Specialist Schools. Question 37 and 38 explored this issue and Q. 39 examined the sorts of Specialist Schools parents felt their children should attend.

TABLE 5.5.10 RESPONSES TO Q. 37

"Do you think that your child meets the requirements to go to a specialist school?"

	COMMUNITY (%)
YES	47.4
NO	52.6
	N = 1101

More than 50% of the community did not see their children as eligible for specialist placement.

TABLE 5.5.11 RESPONSES TO Q. 38

"Do you think that your child should go to a specialist school?"

	COMMUNITY (%)
YES	30.9
NO	61.1
DON'T CARE	8.0
	N = 1131

Whilst a majority of community members felt that their children should not go to a Specialist School, a sizeable proportion were of the opinion that their children should attend Specialist Schools. Although 522 community members answered in the affirmative to Q. 37, only 349 did so for Q. 38. Thus although a large number of community members perceive eligibility for Special placement, they do not all see this as a basis for thinking that their children should go to a Specialist School. Community members do not see perceived eligibility as the basis for perceived right or need for entry into a Specialist School.

Responses to Q. 39 indicated the sorts of Specialist Schools people felt their children should attend. Responses were coded to cover the range of types of schools cited by a representative sample of all questionnaires. Table 5.5.12 shows the percentages of respondents choosing the various types of specialist situations.

TABLE 5.5.12 RESPONSES TO Q. 39

"If YES, in answer to Q. 37 or Q. 38, what sort of specialist school do you think your child should attend?"

(Table - see over)

TABLE 5.5.12

	COMMUNITY (%)
Music; Art/Craft	8.2
Core subjects	7.2
Vocational	4.7
Dance/Drama; Languages	2.9
All-age; different learning patterns	2.5
Consortium	2.0
Selective Specialist	1.7
Generally gifted	1.0
School with Special Strength	0.7
	N = 352 (30.9%)

Core subject specialisation is seen by a sizeable proportion of respondents to this question as an area in which their children should receive Specialist teaching. The existing specialisations in music and art/craft are most frequently perceived as areas in which their children should receive specialist teaching. Specialist Schools for core subjects studies are the next most frequently chosen, followed by vocational specialisation.

The last section, Section E, of the Questionnaire, was designed to explore issues and problems which might relate to specialisation of various kinds. The Project Team was now interested to explore any changes in the priorities expressed in Q. 27 (Section D) as a result of consideration of these issues and problems. Respondents were asked to rank types of specialisation in terms of the priorities which they felt should be assigned to them in future planning by the Education Department, keeping in mind the sorts of problems considered in the previous section of the questionnaire (Section D).

TABLE 5.5.13 COMPARISON TO RESPONSES TO Q. 27 AND Q. 40

TYPE OF SPECIALISATION	MEDIAN RANK COMMUNITY		TEACHERS	
	Q. 27	Q. 40	Q. 27	Q. 40
Vocational school	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
School with special strength	3.1	3.0	2.7	2.9
Consortium of schools	3.2	3.2	2.7	2.9
School with selective specialist stream	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
School with different learning patterns	4.8	4.9	5.0	5.0
Out-of-school specialisation in camps, etc	5.3	5.3	5.1	5.0
All-age school	6.2	6.2	6.6	6.6

Examination of the Table indicates minimal change. Vocational schools and the consortium approach continue to be perceived as types of specialisation for top priority in planning.

6. ANY OTHER COMMENTS

Respondents were invited at the end of the Questionnaire to make any additional comments - on the Questionnaire itself or on any aspects of specialisation.

Responses were coded in terms of content. There was provision for two statements or ideas to be coded. 16.6% of community and 17.9% teachers comments related to the Questionnaire itself.

Table 6.1 illustrates the percentages of the various types of comments made.

(Table - see over)

TABLE 6.1 CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONSES TO INVITATION FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENT

	COMMUNITY (%)	TEACHERS (%)
Comment referred to opinion expressed elsewhere in Questionnaire	41.3	61.3
Relates to year of introduction of specialisation	8.0	6.8
Relates to standard of teachers	7.6	4.3
Relates to basis of selection for specialist placement	4.7	4.3
Relates to specialisation in core subjects	2.8	3.0
Relates to relationship between secondary specialisation and primary courses	2.6	1.7
Other meaningful responses not included in above	9.4	10.6
Insufficient to classify (i.e. comment made but appears meaningless)	7.1	4.7
	N = 688	N = 235

Proportions of comments of each type were not significantly different between teachers and community, except in relation to comments which referred to opinion expressed elsewhere in the Questionnaire, teachers making significantly more responses of this type ($p < 0.001$) and comments relating to standard of teachers which the community referred to more frequently ($p < 0.05$). Overall, very few new ideas were introduced at this stage, indicating that the Questionnaire had provided a comprehensive coverage of the issues of the provision of Specialist Schools in Western Australia.

CHAPTER 6

COMMENTARY

Introduction

The aim of this investigation was to survey community attitudes to the policy of developing a range of high schools which differ from each other primarily in having special offerings and strengths in various areas of the curriculum (and secondarily in having different teaching styles and organisational characteristics). In summarising the conclusions which can be drawn from the data it is important to place this policy in contrast with its alternative, which is the provision of a range of basically similar schools, all offering the most comprehensive curricula possible at much the same levels, though not necessarily having exactly the same range of offerings.

The latter policy dominated high school expansion in W.A. in the 1950s and 1960s. (It is not suggested that the perfect system of comprehensive schools was achieved, but that this was the direction of policy). The former policy has appeared, or rather re-appeared, in the 1970s, and the present research project is clearly part of the process of asking and answering the question how much further this line of development is to be pursued.

The rationales for the two policies are different, and behind them stand two different sets of educational priorities. The provision of similar comprehensive schools is motivated by three main considerations:

1. the aim of equal opportunity: the attempt to ensure that students would not be disadvantaged by going to one school rather than another;

2. the ideal of providing a broad general education for all, so that everyone's experience in school will include a balanced diet of offerings which are intellectual, aesthetic, practical, physical, etc. (the ethos of the comprehensive school has always been against early specialisation, whether for interest or vocational motives);

3. the thought that children of different abilities and backgrounds, while they may be given somewhat different programmes, ought to have some common experiences and some contact with each other.

The interest in providing a range of specialist high schools is motivated by a different set of considerations, which may be expressed in a parallel form:

1. the aim of providing special opportunities for those with particular interests and particular talents (or lack thereof);

2. the ideal of making more room for specialisation in a particular area of the curriculum, because of interest or for vocational reasons, as distinct from pursuing a comprehensive general education.

3. the thought that students with special abilities and special interests can develop these most effectively, and can best be provided for, in the company of their own kind, in some degree of separation from those who don't share those abilities and interests.

In addition there is a fourth motive for setting up specialist schools: economy. It is obviously easier and cheaper to provide strong offerings in, say, music or languages or manual arts, in a few schools, and to have only minimal provision in the others (or even none at all) than to try to make adequate provision for all these areas in all schools.

These policy directions are clearly in conflict. It is obvious that the more one concentrates facilities and provisions in a few places to provide special opportunities, the further one has departed from the goal of equality of opportunity, because the others don't have access to these special provisions. The more freedom one provides for students to specialise in a certain curriculum area, the further one has departed from the concept of a balanced general education for all. And the more one segregates those with special talents and interests in order to develop them, the further one has departed from the notion of a common experience for all.

These comments are not made to pass judgement one way or the other, but only to point out some of the conflicts of values involved. It is possible to strike some sort of compromise between these sets of values, and indeed it is inevitable that this is what any system will do. But it is not possible to have the best of both worlds. There must be a tradeoff between the ideals behind the comprehensive school and the ideals behind special provisions. The present research project is best seen as asking people what sort of compromise they would like to see.

(The policy conflicts have been outlined in terms of specialised curriculum provisions. The secondary considerations, differences between schools in organisational structure or teaching style raise some different issues, but these are played down here, partly because these were very much secondary considerations, and partly because the community showed little interest in them).

The usual warnings need to be issued about statistics on such a subject needing to be considered with great care. The reader of this Report is cautioned that any statistics necessarily imply a selection, which reflects personal views about the aspects of the topic which need investigation. Furthermore, statistics are often used largely to express totals and averages or tendencies. When presented in this way, differences or gaps - which may be considerable - are easily masked. In the final analysis statistics are worth only as much as the use to which they are put by those who report and study them. It is quite clear that the implications can vary according to the standpoint adopted by the people who seek to interpret the results. It is also true that a number of interpretations may be compatible with the data available. But a new judgement is called for in determining which of various interpretations is most appropriate.

Readers of this Report are urged to examine the question of specialisation not only in the light of an apparent readiness of both community members and teachers to accept and support planning in this area, not only in the light of the economic considerations and rationalisation of resources available, but also, and primarily, in the light of the academic, creative, social and psychological needs of all pupils in the Metropolitan area. If any one conclusion can be drawn from the data collected for this study, it is that the subject of specialisation and its related issues appears to be one which is as important to people from all walks of life as it is to a particular set of educators and administrators. The community response of an overall 70% return was overwhelming in view of the length of the questionnaire and the restrictions placed upon respondents. This Report, then, can be considered to speak for a wide variety of community interests. That many community members took up the invitation to make additional comments and many were quite explicit in qualifying the responses they had made - particularly under conditions of forced choice, as in the ranking items - indicates a need to interpret any core of views extracted as "representative" of the community surveyed only in conjunction with a consideration of such comments and of dissenting viewpoints. As much as possible the comments reported have been chosen to represent the main core of responses, together with alternative viewpoints, reflecting, it is hoped, the wide variety of opinions and tendencies concerning specialisation and related issues. The readers of this Report are urged to consider these selections in conjunction with the statistical summaries presented in Chapter 5. They will have served their intended purpose if they make it clear that the community found the topic of specialisation of enough interest and importance to seek to clarify many of their responses, seeing, perhaps, the possible interpretations or implications of their unqualified views. The selections will further serve their purpose if they stimulate thorough investigation and research of issues not adequately covered in this study.

Availability and Criteria of Choice

The present zoning system which directs the children of an area to a particular high school, is designed on the assumption of a system of similar schools with an approximation to equally comprehensive curricula. Indeed, zoning appears to be defensible only on that assumption. On the other hand the policy of setting up a range of specialist schools implies abolition or relaxation of zoning regulations; this is clearly seen in the way the existing specialist schools draw students from outside their boundaries for their special offerings. For this reason Question 9 was asked, about whether people were happy to be zoned for a particular school.

Generally, community responses indicate a preference for choice of secondary schools rather than the current limitations of the boundary system. Such a response is to be anticipated, but it must be read carefully in conjunction with other responses, particularly to the question about how they would use this freedom to choose if they had it. The fact is that the major criterion for wanting to go outside the boundaries now imposed by the Education Department would be teaching standards in the academic subjects, together with the discipline standards and the provision of a wide range of other subject offerings, as is clear in the responses to Question 10.

In considering the various features which might be taken into account in making a choice of secondary school, the community made a very clear statement that the academic standards of the school would be the priority consideration. Standards of discipline and the range of subjects offered respectively also assumed a high degree of importance. An examination of the distributions of responses for these and other features (see Appendix III) together with the statistics presented in Chapter 5, indicates that these features are clearly more important than any others considered in the range of alternatives offered in the questionnaire.

The fact that a school offered special provisions or special strength in a specific area of the curriculum (whether for a selected group or freely available) was given only a middle position in the ranking of factors which might influence parents to choose one school rather than another. Factors such as school size and quality of buildings assumed lowest priority for community members.

Teachers' perceptions of ideal community responses were, interestingly, remarkably similar to the views actually observed in the community. There were no significant differences between the distributions of community and teacher rankings in this part of the rank order. In each case, academic standards, standards of discipline and range of subjects offered were ranked 1, 2, and 3 respectively, and specialist curriculum provisions were given a middle ranking.

This looks like a strong and clear answer to the question how the community views the two policy directions outlined at the beginning of this chapter. In choosing schools for their own children (restricting ourselves to curriculum considerations) it would be much more important for a school to have a solid academic core and as wide as possible a range of electives, than for it to have some specialist subject offering. Given that this pattern of responses came from people in many different areas, it can only be interpreted as a clear vote for a system of schools each of which has as well taught and comprehensive a curriculum as possible, rather than a system of schools each of which has curriculum strengths which others lack. These early responses to the question of choice must be kept in mind in interpreting the subsequent sections of the questionnaire, about the desirability of various sorts of school specialisation, and the expendability of various subjects (questions 12 to 15). It must be kept in mind that respondents were forced into ranking subjects and indicating preferences on the basis of assuming the existence of specialisation. While it can be concluded from the data available that the notion of specialisation is generally acceptable to the community, it cannot be too strongly emphasized that many respondents indicate through their comments and other responses that such acceptance follows only if there is no consequent erosion of the range of subjects and the quality of offerings in all schools, these two goals being given higher priority than the development of special offerings. (And there must be some conflict between developing specialist schools and improving the curriculum range in all schools).

The responses about the relative desirability of various types of specialisation must be read in the light of this earlier response, suggesting that the majority of the community would not support a strong move towards any sort of specialisation with much enthusiasm, because of the implications for standards and range of offerings in non-specialist schools.

It seemed necessary to ask a question about the relative expendability of various curriculum areas, because a concentration of facilities for teaching one type of subject in a few schools necessarily entails a comparatively weaker offering in that area in other schools (and, in the extreme case, its elimination from the programme). It was important to identify the curriculum areas where this process would be most acceptable, and Question 14 was devoted to this end.

When considering the importance assumed by various subjects, results are strongly in keeping with the academic orientation noted above. Responses to the forced ranking of subjects by expendability reinforced the importance attached to the range of subjects offered - a number of respondents refused to attempt the ranking and expressed their objection to the notion of any subject being considered expendable. A large percentage acknowledged the directions and followed them but qualified their responses by stating their feelings that no subject listed could be done without. These spontaneous comments, which obviously reflect some strong opinions because the questionnaire did not call for them, must be seen as expressing again very definite objections on the part of many people, to any development of specialisations in some schools, which entail restrictions to the curriculum in other schools.

Most respondents answered Question 14 nevertheless, and the responses to this together with the responses to Question 12 gave an impression of the relative importance which the community places on various areas of the curriculum. The four core subjects emerge clearly as the most important, with English assuming highest priority. Business education ranked a close fifth for the community. Once again teachers' views of the ideal were identical in terms of the core subjects. Business education, however, would be ranked considerably closer to the end of the ranking as far as teachers were concerned. Foreign languages, traditionally ranked amongst the "academic" subjects, was ideally seen in fifth place by the teachers - the community was quite divided on the importance of strengths in this area.

Reasons for the rankings, requested in Questions 13 and 15, were clustered about preparation for future life and education, with preparation for the work force assuming greater importance with the community than ideally perceived by teachers. Although placing considerable emphasis upon the knowledge and career purposes of education, teachers looked to a somewhat greater consideration of enrichment of present life and non-utilitarian personal growth, than the community was willing to express. Clearly, while teacher ideals and community rankings were largely congruent, the criteria used were somewhat different.

If the responses to Questions 12 and 15 are considered in isolation, the community and teachers express in them a highly businesslike instrumental and vocational order of priorities. Taking the rankings on their own it could be argued that the community is calling for a "no frills" education for their children; that the current conservative call for a return to the basics also means a call for the schools to play down the importance of curriculum areas which are of less academic and vocational importance. If any curriculum offerings were to be further rationalised by consolidation in a few schools, with attenuation or disappearance of them in other schools, then this would be most acceptable in 'cultural' areas such as music, dance/drama, art/craft, and media studies.

But these responses certainly cannot be read as expressing approval for any such rationalisation. Respondents were forced to rank subjects in order of importance and dispensability, and their compliance with the instructions cannot be interpreted as meaning that they would be happy with consolidations of this sort. In fact the qualifications which some of them added to their answers to Question 14, and the responses to Question 10, make it clear that there is strong feeling for the preservation of the widest possible range of curriculum offerings in all schools.

There is a further point to be made about the relative importance placed by the community on the various subject-areas of the curriculum. Broadly, first importance was given to academic courses, second importance to practical courses, and third importance to cultural courses. It is fair to say that these opinions reflect those which have underlain West Australian schools for generations: this sequence of priorities is expressed in various ways in the schools, such as in decisions about which courses are compulsory and which are elective at various levels, and in how strongly the Education Department has felt committed to provide teaching in an area for all students. For instance in the lower secondary years, no student can opt out of science or mathematics, many students are able to opt out of manual arts or home economics, and there are many students for whom music is not available even as an elective.

The community members who expressed this order of importance were, most of them, educated in a school system which embodied (and still embodies) the same order of priorities. Their value priorities need to be qualified by the observation what they have been schooled in the same priorities; their image of that schools should be like is no doubt strongly influenced by their own experience of schooling.

It is not being suggested that their value priorities ought to be ignored. But it is being suggested that they should not be accepted uncritically as an independent influence on educational policy, because they have themselves been shaped by previous and existing educational policy. It is to be expected that if similar questions were put to a community in which schools had always treated the art programme (for instance) as indispensable, then community responses would reflect the same estimate of its importance.

It is natural that the cumulative effect of any education system is to produce many individuals who are only able to recognise as educationally important the things that were emphasized in their own schooling.

Of the two types of existing schools with curriculum specialisation (those offering a special programme exclusively for a highly selected group of gifted children, and those offering special strength in a curriculum area, available to any reasonably capable students who are interested) the latter was favoured more highly. This is consistent with the expressed desire of community members to ensure for their children as wide a range of subject choice as possible. The availability of specialist schools of the latter type could be seen as enlarging the range of options for all. But the existence of specialist schools of the former type increases the options only of those few students who can meet the selection criteria; indeed they might be seen as narrowing the range of options for the rest of the school population, because they result in a concentration of specialist teachers and resources in centres which are not accessible to other interested students.

If one takes in isolation section D of the questionnaire (questions 18 to 27) dealing with the desirability of various forms of specialisation, one seems to find strong support for some policy shifts in that direction. Least interest is shown in the development of schools with distinctive administrative structures and with special approaches to teaching and learning. Strongest approval is given to the development of vocational schools and to the concept of a consortium of schools with a range of different curriculum strengths (and weaknesses). But the responses also indicate quite strong support for other forms of specialisation, including selective schools for the generally gifted, selective streams for students with special talents, and schools with special curriculum strengths outside a consortium system. In fact most of the suggestions put to the community in this section seem to receive favourable receptions.

But there is a very interesting discrepancy between these responses and the responses to questions 38 and 39, asking the community whether they think that their own children ought to attend a specialist school, and if so, what type. Only 30.9% of the community thought that their children ought to attend any sort of specialist school. Only 15.3% of that 30.9%, or 4.7% of the community sample surveyed, thought that their children ought to attend a vocational school. This is strikingly different from the support for vocational schools which seemed to be expressed in response to question 24; 63.3% of the community considered them highly desirable, and 30.4% desirable. There is evidently a great difference between what people approve in the abstract (for other people's children?) and what they would want for their own children.

There are similar descrepancies for other types of specialisation. In response to question 20, 76.3% of the population sample considered that a selective school for the generally gifted child was either desirable or highly desirable. And yet in response to question 39, only about 1% of the sample (3.4% of 30.9%) thought that their own children ought to attend such a school, This is more surprising than the results for the vocational school; one might have expected many more parents to be attracted by the thought of the prestige and the advantages attached to selection for a special school for the most capable students.

The support expressed for various sorts of specialist school considered in principle (in response to questions 18 to 27) must, then, be treated very cautiously. When asked what they would want for their own children people are much less enthusiastic about specialisation in general, and about particular forms of specialisation. It is clear that their previous expressions of approval for various sorts of specialisation need to be discounted considerably, to arrive at a reasonable estimate of the acceptability of some of these policies to the public.

Some other parts of the response pattern to question 39 are confusing and difficult to interpret for another reason. Only about 2% say their children ought to attend a consortium system of schools, and less than 1% say they would want their children to go to a school with special strength in some curriculum area. This appears to be grossly in conflict with the pattern of responses in section D of the questionnaire, where the consortium emerged as one of the two most highly favoured specialisation concepts, and the school with special curriculum strength (open to any interested and reasonably capable student) was more highly favoured than the school with a selected special stream.

However, these conflicts are apparent rather than real, and have been produced by the form of question 39. Respondents were also given the option of stating that their children ought to go to schools with various specific curriculum strengths: in the core subjects, or in music, art and craft, or in vocational subjects, or whatever. They have not, in answering the question, rejected the notion of a school with special strength but they have stated which area of special strength they think their children would profit from. The situation is the same with the notion of a consortium. This is not an alternative to the school with special strength; it is a way of organising a group of such schools in a larger unit. Again, in answering question 39 respondents have not rejected the notion of a consortium, but have gone straight to what type of school within a consortium they would want their children to attend.

In spite of some rather surprising first appearances, the comparative levels of support given to various types of specialisation policies are compatible with the comparative levels of support in section D of the questionnaire. But the absolute level of support is strikingly lower for all types of specialisation, when respondents are asked what they think should be provided for their own children.

When a total picture is put together from the responses to different sections of the questionnaire, it is clear that, of the various specialisation policies presented, the one that received strongest community support is the concept of a consortium of schools, a group of schools each with its own special curriculum strengths, so organised that all schools in the group would be open to all the students in their combined intake areas. There would be considerable support for giving one school within any such consortium a special strength in vocational courses.

The preference for an open-choice system like this is what one would have expected in view of the high importance placed by so many people, in responding to question 10, on preserving the widest possible range of course options for their children. The consortium concept does not involve reserving some options for any specially selected groups.

However, the consortium idea, as presented in the questionnaire, would involve restrictions to any student's range of options, in another way. He is confronted with an array of schools, each of which has its special curriculum strength (in maths or science, music or manual arts) but also its special curriculum weaknesses or even gaps (in areas where other member schools are strong). The whole consortium contains a wide range of possibilities, but the choice of any one school within it would involve accepting its limitations; one would have to pay a price for the advantages of access to its area of special strength, by having to do without the areas of learning which it didn't offer, and make do with minimal opportunities in the areas where its offerings were thin.

There is a possible modification to the consortium concept which, while preserving most of its advantages, would alleviate this problem. That is to open up the possibility that students who have chosen one school within a consortium as their "home" school might travel on particular days to other member schools for courses or activities which their own school didn't provide. There would be some obvious difficulties in implementing this proposal, but it seems feasible at least to a limited extent. If it were possible it would make the consortium idea even more acceptable to a public clearly concerned that their children's range of curriculum choice should not be restricted, while retaining the benefits of the rationalised deployment of expensive facilities and specialised staff which inspired the original idea.

Concluding Comments

One of the noteworthy features of the total pattern of responses is the evident hope on the part of many people, of being able to "have their cake and eat it": an optimistic assumption that all desirable goals are compatible. For instance in one context the community sample expressed quite strong support for selective schools and selective streams, exclusively for students with high general ability or specific talents, which would be developed through the provision of special facilities and opportunities. In another context strong feeling is expressed for the preservation of the widest possible range of opportunities for all. One doesn't find in the pattern of responses much appreciation of the obvious fact that these two policies can't both be pursued wholeheartedly with success; however large one's budget, a substantial commitment of facilities and staff for the exclusive benefit of selected groups must involve for the unselected students a closing off of some opportunities which would otherwise have been open to them.

It is worth mentioning another example of this apparent failure to realise that one can't have everything. In answering question 10 the community sample opted very strongly for academic standards as their most important criterion in making a choice of a high school for their children. And yet, as has been noticed, they were prepared to give fairly strong support for the separation of generally and specifically gifted children in specialist schools. Confronted by question 33, whether, if their children attended a non-specialist school in an area from which the most talented students were selected to go to specialist schools elsewhere, they would be concerned that the standards of their own children's school would suffer, only 42.8% of the community sample expressed concern. Admittedly the notion of standards is not very precise, but on any reasonable interpretation of it, it is surely quite unrealistic to imagine that a school could lose its best students, resources and teachers to other schools, without having its own standards adversely affected. Yet over half the community sample seem to imagine just that. Of course nearly half of the community sample did see the danger, including one respondent who asked: "Why didn't you put in some information for people who don't really realize what this would do to the average school, i.e. ruin them".

There is, then a certain lack of realism to be discerned in the community responses: a tendency to give support to a variety of different policy suggestions without much regard to their possible incompatibility. Because of this one must be cautious about putting too much significance on the degree of support expressed for individual policy suggestions in relation to specialisation, considered in isolation, and this explains why the designers of the questionnaire included forced choice items to determine relative importance. Most such suggestions met with a reasonably high level of approval. It is better to place more significance on questions which call for the respondent to rank different educational values in order of importance, to judge which specialisation policies are more or less acceptable, and so on. Here even those who would otherwise not have done so are forced to consider their priorities. In these responses (e.g. to question 10) all forms of specialisation appear well down in the community's priority list.

The problem of the incompatibility of alternative policy directions, each with valued ideals informing it, is of course always with us. It needs to be faced in a clear-headed way in thinking about some of the specialist school issues. The point has already been made that the provision of special facilities and special opportunities exclusively for a selected group of talented students necessarily implies a relative limitation of the facilities and opportunities open to those outside that selected group. There is also a danger, which needs to be watched carefully though it doesn't have the same inevitability, that the establishment of specialist programmes for the gifted in a few centres may be accompanied by an absolute diminution of interest in the provisions for the rest of the school population in that curriculum area.

Some suggestions were encountered that this may have been happening in the case of music, the area of specialisation which was chosen for closer examination because the Perth Modern School music group is one of the longest-established and the best known of the specialisation ventures. The hints came from two sources. One was the preliminary telephone survey of the status of music in metropolitan high schools (reported in Appendix II). Some principals of schools which are not specialist music schools reported difficulty in getting support for music programmes in their own schools from the Education Department. Feelings were expressed that the attention of those administering this area of the Department's activities are so firmly fixed on the achievements of the selected streams of musically talented students, that little interest and energy is left for the provision of respectable offerings in music for the rest. It is not being stated that these feelings reflect reality but they certainly exist; and there is obviously a danger which must be kept clearly in mind, that specialist programmes for a talented minority could easily absorb a disproportionate share of interest and resources in this way, or could at least be seen to do so.

Some comments from members of the community expressed similar feelings of dissatisfaction with the general level of provision. One respondent who had not had the benefit of contact with one of the specialist schools remarked: "Music is a subject that seems to be neglected at Government Secondary Schools".

The other source of indications that this may be happening in the case of music was found in the Annual Reports of the Education Department. Since 1968 the sections of the Annual Reports dealing with music have been almost exclusively concerned with the development and the exploits of the specialist music groups. On the basis of that publication one would conclude that little or no musical activity exists anywhere else in the system. Again it is not being argued that this is the case, but again there is an indication that the establishment of special programmes for a few students with high musical ability may have engaged a great deal of the attention and energy of that section of the Department, with a corresponding lack of attention to providing a music programme accessible to all who want it.

Here again we confront the conflict between two incompatible sets of priorities which were outlined at the beginning of this chapter, and which arise particularly in connection with specialist provisions for selected talented groups. How much importance should be placed on the provision of special opportunities to develop the gifted student to the utmost, as against the provisions of the widest range of opportunities for all? This is fundamentally an ideological question to which there is no objective answer equally acceptable to everyone. But it is important that whatever policy is developed the decisions that are made recognise the fact that this is a choice situation in which one can't have everything one wants; any imaginable policy must involve some compromise between sets of ideals which are fundamentally irreconcilable. The consortium of schools concept would appear to present an educationally and socially acceptable and effective compromise in the provision of specialist resources for as wide a range of students as possible in Western Australian High Schools.

CHAPTER 7

DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

That the Specialist Schools Study is now complete is not to imply that the content of the subject of specialisation has been exhausted. The scope of the area of interest would justify further and more extensive analysis and reflection and there is a considerable wealth of information in the data which goes beyond the frame of reference of the Report.

Clearly, as the research evidence gathered for the Report has been examined and discussed, and a variety of alternative explanations have been put forward, there have been more questions raised than answers given. It would seem appropriate then, at this point, to conclude with additional questions - directions for further research.

Further Analysis of Existing Data:

A number of further questions can be asked with regard to the existing Questionnaire data, the most interesting of these being the question whether distinct patterns of responses come from different groups, and sources of confusion in the community. Further analysis of the data to determine the answer to this question, to identify the members of the different groups, if any, and to interpret the findings, is already in the planning stages.

Education For What?

The study of community attitudes to specialisation raises a number of interesting philosophical questions which might be amenable to some form of investigation.

The question of specialist provisions in education can be seen to be closely related to the question of "education for what?" This poses an important problem. What does the community expect students to gain from attendance at secondary school? The Specialist Schools Study has yielded some indication that parents and community members in general focus on the career and knowledge purposes of education and not nearly so much on less pragmatic goals such as the development of cultural interests, leisure pursuits or social skills. The results highlight a substantial core of such views shared by the community and teachers alike. Is this view consistent with the philosophical considerations so carefully examined in the Dettman Report of 1969, which has, apparently, guided education in Western Australia during the ensuing years? Are community attitudes and expectations congruent with the aims set forth in that report?

Does the current thinking regarding possible vocational schools and more "practical" specialities (e.g. Home Economics) represent a response to community thinking and pressure? How far is the Education Department in Western Australia influenced by political considerations (e.g. the current youth unemployment problem)? If the Education Department is responding to community attitudes, will this require a change in the philosophies outlined in the Dettman Report? A consideration of Specialist Schools ought, it would seem, to be placed not only in the context of rationalisation of resources, individualisation of education, or community attitudes and expectations alone, but primarily, in the context of a current and well reasoned philosophy of education. (But who should formulate this : the professionals, the public, the politicians, or some combination of all interested groups?).

Is it time, during the current atmosphere of healthy self-examination and change, for the Education Department to reaffirm or restate the aims for education in Western Australia, and to set the results of the Specialist Schools Study in this context?

Perceptions of Schools

Closely allied to the above question of "education for what?" is that relating to community perceptions of the schools. Perceptions are, generally, largely a product of past experiences. It is therefore important to ask two related questions:

1. What does the school *mean* to the families surveyed? Is it just another form of authority in the community? Do parents perceptions simply reflect what they have been *taught* to value? Or does the school have other connotations?

2. It is not enough to conclude that the community does or does not react favourably to specialisation, or that it appears to value one group of subjects over another, or one purpose for education over another - we must also ask how the community has arrived at such values; the influences upon such valuing are what is important. How far does the school determine the values and perceptions expressed by the community?

Further, any reasonable or valuable consideration of the attitudes expressed by the community must surely rest upon an understanding of the extent to which the community is realistically aware of what goes on in the schools. Are parents well-informed or do they rely entirely on their own experiences? Are their own experiences largely different from those of their children?

Objectives vs. Outcomes

It would seem that an *essential* question for further research relates to aims avowed and aims actually achieved - the relationship between objectives and outcomes. For example, the Education Department claims that core subject instruction on a levels basis allows the possibility of enrichment for brighter or more highly motivated students. Appropriately advanced content is supposed to be available to students so that there can be in depth exploration of a subject. Interviews revealed that many competent teachers and senior administrators, however, feel that no such thing is happening : it may be so for *some* students in *some* schools, but the degree of *real* individualisation which is perceived to occur in many schools is far from sufficient. This question would seem to warrant very careful investigation.

Further, the avowed aim of some Specialist Schools is to provide enrichment/ extension for gifted/talented students in particular areas. With intellectual capacity as an entry criterion, however, it is possible that the highly motivated or even highly talented but less generally able student will be excluded. Does it fit the original aims of specialisation that it should be granted only to the quite bright students? Are skill or talent and general ability strongly related?

Again, do students attending Specialist Schools actually gain considerably more than their counterparts in regular schools? Is the time and the expenditure justified? Discussions of specialisation should include not only a careful definition of what exists and who approves, but also who has gained or lost in the process. A controlled follow-up of groups of talented pupils in regular and Specialist Schools is called for. Also, the extent to which drop-outs occur and the possible reasons for these bears consideration (several Specialist School principals mentioned a drop-out rate).

The Education Department avows no loss to other schools due to the establishment of Specialist Schools, yet there is a perception that Specialist Schools have deprived other schools of resources (Appendix II). The Department also claims no decline in subject offerings in other schools, but again, this is not the perception of staff members in many non-specialist schools. There would seem to be an urgent need for a very careful appraisal of these perceptions, and, in conjunction, a reconsideration of actual "specialist" offerings as they do exist in the schools. Are the offerings extensive and broad enough, for example, to provide adequate cultural, and recreational experience, or are they in fact, deficient and restrictive?

Education Out-of-School

In spite of the wide range of offerings available in secondary schools today, it remains true that a large part of education is gained from the environment, the family, and society. Moreover, there is no doubt that many out-of-school "education" agencies provide a wide range of possibilities which could be used productively. But, are they used? Before considering subjects expendable or reducible because they can be provided out of school, research is called for into:

1. The extent to which the community actually uses out of school resources (and which groups make most and least use).

2. The extent to which the community is actually aware of out-of-school educational opportunities.

Finally, a careful consideration of the question whether the school is the appropriate place for specialised education in cultural, arts, and recreational fields is called for. Perhaps the answer to this question lies elsewhere. And perhaps it would be more in the interests of resource rationalisation than the current system. It would seem a question worth asking seriously.

Continuity of Education

A final area of interest raised in the Specialist Schools Study is the degree to which the community - and teachers - perceive continuity between one phase of schooling and another, and the extent to which they view this as desirable. With the K-12 concept under firm consideration, this is worthy of immediate investigation.

There are no doubt many other questions already raised in the conclusions and coming to mind in the reading of the whole report. Specialisation has emerged, in this study, as a subject that arouses a good deal of comment from people of all walks of life. It is certainly a subject considered important enough to warrant time and investigation by a large percentage of the community. Further investigation and research into the issues raised by this report would be welcomed by the community - particularly if it could be demonstrated that their thinking and responses had been worth consideration and follow-up by the Education Department.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Slightly different forms of the questionnaire were given to teachers and to members of the community. Teachers were asked several additional questions, as well as all the questions directed to the community sample. This Appendix contains:

1. the questionnaire administered to the community sample;

2. the extra questions which were directed to teachers.

SPECIALIST SCHOOLS STUDY

SURVEY OF ATTITUDES TO SPECIALISATION
IN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The Specialist Schools Study was initiated by discussions between the Director General of Education and the Staff of the School of Education at Murdoch University.

The Education Department of W.A. considers it important that the educational provisions of its schools should meet the expectations and the needs of the parents and the community.

This study may have some influence on the future directions of State secondary school development in the Metropolitan Area. For this reason we ask you to take the community questionnaire seriously and to answer it as best you can.

SURVEY OF ATTITUDES TO SPECIALISATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has been designed to gather information from members of the community about their attitudes to specialisation in State secondary schools in the Metropolitan Area.

The survey has two major aims:

i. to let you express your attitudes to specialisation in Metropolitan State secondary schools and what you would like to see as the future directions the Education Department should take in relation to schools of this type.

ii. to allow you to express your opinion about the degree of choice you have, or would like to have, regarding the secondary schools attended by your children.

Your answers should express your own particular views. All information will be treated confidentially. No attempt will be made to identify individual respondents.

Many questions may be answered simply be placing a tick in the appropriate box. Where another form of answer is required, this will be indicated.

Note: This questionnaire comprises 5 sections, namely:

A. Questions about Yourself.
B. Questions about the Availability of Choice of Secondary Schools.
C. Questions about your Awareness of Specialisation.
D. Questions about Various Forms of Specialisation.
E. Questions about Problems Involved in Specialisation.

Please answer each section.

SECTION A BACKGROUND INFORMATION

We would like some information about yourself which will help us to be sure that we have a sample of opinions which is representative of all the various age-ranges, occupations and backgrounds of members of the community of the Metropolitan Area.

Q.1. YOUR AGE

How old were you on your last birthday? ...

UNDER 21 YEARS	
21 - 30	
31 - 40	
41 - 50	
51 - 60	
OVER 60 YEARS	

Q.2. YOUR SEX

MALE	
FEMALE	

Q.3. COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Where were you born?
Where was your spouse born?

	Self	Spouse
Australia		
United Kingdom		
Ireland		
U.S.A. or Canada		
Italy, Greece		
REST of Europe (please specify)		
OTHER (please specify)		

OFFICE USE ONLY

ID (1-4)	
Card (5)	1
(6)	
(7)	
(8)	
(9)	

OFFICE USE ONLY

Q.4. TYPE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ATTENDED

Please indicate by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate boxes below the type of secondary school last attended by you and by your spouse.

TYPE OF SCHOOL	SELF	SPOUSE
No Secondary Schooling		
Independent Secondary School		
Government Secondary School		
Government Specialist* Secondary School		
Other (please specify)		

(10)

(11)

*A Specialist School is one in which groups of students are selected from outside the normal boundaries of the school to take special studies in a subject in which they demonstrate particular talents or skills e.g. Music at Perth Modern School. The special stream students in these schools take the specialist subject in addition to the normal range of secondary school subjects.

Q.5. OCCUPATION OF MAIN BREADWINNER

What is the usual or main occupation of the main breadwinner in your household?

Please describe in terms of the level of the occupation and the nature of the occupation
e.g. Plumber on wages
Senior clerk in bank

Please do not use general terms such as Civil Servant, clerk, teacher, proprietor, manager, without further specification.

____

____

(12)

OFFICE USE ONLY

Q.6 NUMBER OF CHILDREN

How many children do you have ... ☐ (13)

If you have no children please move on to Section B of the questionnaire.

Q.7 KIND OF SCHOOL ATTENDED BY YOUR CHILDREN

For each type of school listed below, please indicate the number of your children attending each one:

For this question, please use numbers (do NOT tick)

Primary Government School		(14)
Primary Non-Government School		(15)
Secondary Government School		(16)
Specialist Secondary Government School		(17)
Secondary Non-Government School		(18)

Q.8. PROPOSED SECONDARY SCHOOLING FOR YOUR CHILDREN

If your children do not yet attend Secondary school, please indicate, by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box below, the kind of Secondary School to which you are planning to send your children.

Government Secondary School		
Non-Government Secondary School		(19)

OFFICE USE ONLY

SECTION B AVAILABILITY OF CHOICE

The Education Department of Western Australia has an established boundary system so that most students go to the High School in their local area.

We would like you to express your feelings about this system and to indicate whether you would prefer to have more choice about the Government Secondary schools attended by your children. Even if you have no children at Government schools, please answer the questionnaire as if you did.

We would like you to answer all questions in the following Sections.

Q.9. Would you prefer to be allowed to choose any Government secondary school rather than be restricted by a boundary system?

YES	
NO	
DON'T CARE	

(20)

Q.10. If the Education Department allowed you to choose to send your children to any State secondary school, what sort of things would you take into account in making your choice?

Listed below are some of the features which might influence your choice.

In answering this question, please read the list right through first, then place a number next to each feature, numbering the most important 1, the next most important 2, and so on.

Do not give the same number to any two things on the list. Be sure you have a number in each box.

		OFFICE USE ONLY
Sporting facilities		(21-22)
Standards of discipline		(23-24)
Convenience of transport		(25-26)
Academic standards		(27-28)
Quality of buildings		(29-30)
Facilities such as Library/Swimming Pool		(31-32)
Range of subjects offered		(33-34)
Special strength in particular subjects e.g. Music, Art/Craft, Languages		(35-36)
Size of school		(37-38)
Continuity of subjects from primary school		(39-40)
"Home room" or other groupings with special staff to look after students' interests		(41-42)
Reputation of the school in the community		(43-44)
Insistence on school uniforms		(45-46)
Friendly school atmosphere		(47-48)

OFFICE USE ONLY

Q.11. Would you prefer all secondary schools to do the same range of subjects at about the same average level, or would you favour some schools having special strengths in particular subject areas?

Please indicate your preference by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box below.

Same range of subjects in all schools		
Schools with special strengths in some subjects		(49)

Q.12. Suppose that special subject strengths were found in the secondary schools. Which subjects would be most important to you in making a choice between different schools?

(We would like you to answer this question even though you might have indicated in Q.11 above that you did not favour schools with special strengths.)

Please read through the whole list of subjects first, then place a 1 against the most important for your choice, a 2 against the next most important for your choice, and so on.

Art/Craft		(50-51)
Business Education		(52-53)
Dance/Drama		(54-55)
English		(56-57)
Foreign Languages		(58-59)
Home Economics		(60-61)
Manual Arts		(62-63)
Mathematics		(64-65)
Media Studies		(66-67)
Music		(68-69)
Physical Education		(70-71)
Science		(72-73)
Social Studies		(74-75)
Sport		(76-77)
Technical Drawing		(78-79)

OFFICE USE ONLY

Q.13 It is important for us to know why you would see some subjects as more important than others in making choices between different schools.

What influenced your ordering of the subjects in Q.12?

Please outline the reason for your choices in the spaces provided below. Please be very specific.

(80)

Q.14 If the provision of special strengths in certain subjects meant that some other schools would not have these subjects, which subjects do you consider the schools could do without?

Please read through the whole list below, then number the boxes to indicate which subjects you consider least important for all secondary schools. Place a 1 against the subject the schools could most reasonably do without, a 2 against the subject they could next most reasonably do without, and so on.

CARD 2

ID

(1-4)

(5) 2

Art/Craft		(6-7)
Business Education		(8-9)
Dance/Drama		(10-11)
English		(12-13)
Foreign Languages		(14-15)
Home Economics		(16-17)
Manual Arts		(18-19)
Mathematics		(20-21)
Media Studies		(22-23)
Music		(24-25)
Physical Education		(26-27)
Science		(28-29)
Social Studies		(30-31)
Sport		(32-33)
Technical Drawing		(34-35)

Q.15. We are also interested in your reasons for considering that some schools could possibly do without certain subjects.

Although you have given some indication of the reasons for the importance of different subjects in making a choice between schools, different things may come to mind when you think about the schools doing without certain subjects.

Please indicate in the space provided below your reason for the way in which you have ordered the subjects in Q.14.

OFFICE USE ONLY

(36)

OFFICE USE ONLY

SECTION C AWARENESS OF SPECIALISATION

A Specialist School was defined in Section A as one in which groups of students are able to cross the normal boundaries of the school to take special studies in a subject in which they demonstrate particular talent or skill, e.g. Music at Perth Modern School. A school may also be specialist in offering a special strength in some area, e.g. Foreign Languages at Hampton Senior High School.

There are several other Government High Schools in the Metropolitan Area which offer Special Strengths or Special Streams in subjects such as Music, Art/Craft, Dance/Drama, Languages.

Q.16 Did you know, before answering this questionnaire, that these special features existed in some schools?

YES	
NO	

(37)

Q.17 If you answered YES to Q.16, could you name some schools which offer special streams or special strengths? Please list in the Table below the names of the schools and the subject areas in which they specialise.

SCHOOL	SPECIALIST SUBJECTS

(38)

(39)

SECTION D FORMS OF SPECIALISATION

OFFICE USE ONLY

In Section C, two types of Specialist Schools already in the Government secondary education system were mentioned: schools with special strengths and schools with selected specialist streams.

We would like you to let us know how desirable or undesirable you find schools of these types. Even if you have no children attending a Government Secondary school, please remember that we would like you to answer all questions as if you did.

TYPE 1 In Selective Specialist Schools all students take the general range of subjects offered in all schools, but, in addition, a selected group of talented students comes into the school from outside its normal boundaries to take special studies in some subjects.

Special staff and resources are provided in the specialist area. Subjects offered in this way are Music, Art/Craft, and Dance/Drama.

Q.18 Please indicate your feelings by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box for each type of specialist school listed below:

	Highly Desirable	Desirable	Undesirable	Highly Undesirable	
Selective School with Art/Craft Speciality					(40)
Selective School with Music Speciality					(41)
Selective School with Dance/Drama Speciality					(42)

OFFICE USE ONLY

TYPE 2 In some schools there are special strengths in particular subject areas. In certain cases boundaries may be relaxed (on application to the Education Department) to allow interested or talented students to attend these schools, but the courses are not restricted to a specially selected group. In Metropolitan Government High Schools, special strengths are offered in Music and in Foreign Languages.

Q.19 Please indicate your feelings about the desirability of such schools by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box for each specialist school in the Table below.

	HIGHLY DESIRABLE	DESIRABLE	UNDESIRABLE	HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE
Special strength in Music				
Special strength in Languages				

(43)

(44)

While the Specialist School system outlined above provides special strengths for students with particular talents or skills or special interests in particular areas, there is no Specialist School for children who are generally very able, children who are skilled in most or all subjects.

Q.20. How desirable do you think it might be for the Education Department to create a Specialist school or a school with a Specialist stream for the very bright child?

HIGHLY DESIRABLE	
DESIRABLE	
UNDESIRABLE	
HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE	

(45)

OFFICE USE ONLY

Given that economic factors may limit the offerings of various schools, an alternative to the Specialist school system above might be a consortium of schools in a particular geographical area, offering a range of subject strengths so that anyone in the enlarged boundaries could take any one of the specialities offered. Defining a particular geographical area would allow reasonably easy access to all schools in the consortium.

e.g. One school in the area or region might offer music, while other schools did not have a music programme; a second school might offer a wide range of Foreign Languages, while other schools had a reduced offering in Languages; a third school might provide a strong programme in Business Education which other schools were unable to offer; and so on. Such a system would be economic in bringing expensive staff and resources together in one school rather than spreading them over many schools. It would allow all students to choose over a wide range of subject areas in a particular region.

Q.21 Please indicate your feelings about the desirability of such a consortium system by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box.

HIGHLY DESIRABLE	
DESIRABLE	
UNDESIRABLE	
HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE	

(46)

The model described above is a consortium of schools offering special subject strengths. There are other possible ways of looking at specialisation apart from the subjects offered in the schools.

The following questions in this Section deal with some alternative ways of offering specialisation.

OFFICE USE ONLY

Administrative structures: A special feature of the school might be an unusual administrative structure.

For example, the school might be an all-age school, designed to cater for students of all ages from kindergarten through to the end of high school. This would mean that the problems of the break between primary school and high school would be decreased. Specialist teachers might be employed to teach their subjects to the whole age-range from younger to older students. In other subjects secondary teachers would work with primary teachers and vice versa.

Q.22 Please indicate by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box below how desirable you consider the development of such all-age schools in the Metropolitan Area.

HIGHLY DESIRABLE	
DESIRABLE	
UNDESIRABLE	
HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE	

(47)

Learning patterns: The school might offer special styles of learning which differ from traditional learning patterns generally seen in the schools.

e.g. the school may have individually programmed timetables; or learning based on an open programme where students options are not restricted; a teacher might do less traditional instruction and act more as a guide for students learning.

Q.23 Please indicate by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box below whether you consider it desirable for the Education Department to develop a range of schools which vary in this way.

HIGHLY DESIRABLE	
DESIRABLE	
UNDESIRABLE	
HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE	

(48)

OFFICE USE ONLY

For students who have found academic subjects very difficult, some countries have vocational schools which are generously staffed and equipped for all sorts of practical subjects.

e.g. hairdressing, motor mechanics, retailing, and so on.

Students who are likely to find regular high school programmes too difficult or uninteresting are selected to attend the vocational schools. They work in small groups and are given work experience to prepare them for employment in various careers.

In vocational schools the emphasis is on practical rather than academic subjects.

Q.24 Please indicate by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box below how desirable you think it might be to develop such vocational schools in the Perth Metropolitan Area.

HIGHLY DESIRABLE	
DESIRABLE	
UNDESIRABLE	
HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE	

(49)

Special offerings through the school need not be the only way students' special talents and interests can be catered for. Special camps, excursions, weekend seminars are held for talented and interested students in certain subject areas. These camps often bring together students from a number of schools over a wide area.

Q.25 Please indicate by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box below how desirable you think it might be for the Education Department to provide a wide offering of such camps, Saturday morning classes, etc.

HIGHLY DESIRABLE	
DESIRABLE	
UNDESIRABLE	
HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE	

(50)

OFFICE USE ONLY

Q.26 What do you consider to be the best way to provide for the needs of students with special talents and interests?

Please indicate your feelings by placing a tick (✓) against one of the alternatives listed below. Tick the most suitable alternative.

Specialist offerings in the schools	☐
A wide offering of camps, Saturday classes, etc, to take the place of specialist offerings in the schools	☐
Specialist offerings in the schools plus camps, etc.	☐

(51)

Q.27 Suppose you were in a position to decide the future directions the Education Department should take with regard to specialisation in the Secondary schools. Given the restricted finances and resources you might have to consider because of budget pressures, which of the various types of specialisation mentioned in this Section would you give priority?

Please indicate by placing a number in the box alongside each type of specialisation listed below. Read through the list carefully first, then place a 1 against the type of specialisation you would give first priority, a 2 against the type of specialisation you would give next priority and so on. You should place a 7 against the type of specialisation you would give least priority.

TYPE OF SPECIALISATION	PRIORITY	
All-age school		(52)
School with special strength		(53)
Consortium of schools		(54)
Vocational school		(55)
School with selected specialist stream		(56)
School with different learning patterns		(57)
Out-of-school specialisation in camps,etc		(58)

OFFICE USE ONLY

SECTION E PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN SPECIALISATION

The provision of specialist schools and the opportunity to attend them might mean certain costs to the schools, the parents, and the children.

The development of specialisation in some schools may mean that resources and staff are unavailable to students.

Q.28 Would you be willing to accept the fact that some schools might lose subject offerings so that specialist schools could build strengths?

YES	
NO	
DON'T CARE	

(59)

Suppose you had the opportunity to send your child to a specialist school.

Q.29 Would you be willing to have your child catch one or more buses over long distances each morning and afternoon with possible lengthy waiting time between connections?

YES	
NO	
DON'T CARE	

(60)

Q.30 Would you be willing to provide transport yourself?

YES (if possible)	
NO	
DON'T CARE	

(61)

OFFICE USE ONLY

Q.31 Would you be willing to have your child attend extra studies out of school hours to meet the requirements of a specialist subject?

YES	
NO	
DON'T CARE	

(62)

Q.32 Would you be willing to have your child miss class time in some school subjects in order to take specialist studies?

YES	
NO	
DON'T CARE	

(63)

Suppose your child went to a non-specialist school from which talented students left to go to various specialist schools.

Q.33 Would you be concerned that the loss of those talented students would affect the schools' standards and tone?

YES	
NO	
DON'T CARE	

(64)

Students who attend Specialist schools are often required to make a choice of speciality in Year 7 in the Primary school, before they move into High School.

Q.34 Do you think this is too early for a child to make a decision about the future directions he will take in his studies?

YES	
NO	
DON'T CARE	

(65)

OFFICE USE ONLY

Suppose your child attended a primary school with a strong programme in a certain subject (e.g. music), but was unable to continue that programme in the High School because staff and resources were allocated to specialist schools.

Q.35 How would you react to the situation?

Please indicate by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box, how acceptable you would find such a situation.

ACCEPTABLE	
UNACCEPTABLE	
DON'T CARE	

(66)

Q.36 Do you feel that selection of students on the basis of special talent or skill is socially undesirable?

YES	
NO	
DON'T CARE	

(67)

		OFFICE USE ONLY
Q.37 Do you think that your child meets the requirements to go to a specialist school.	YES ☐ NO ☐	(68)
Q.38 Do you think that your child should go to a specialist school?	YES ☐ NO ☐ DON'T CARE ☐	(69)
Q.39. If YES, in answer to Q.38 or Q.39, what sort of specialist school do you think your child should attend?	____________________ ____________________ ____________________ ____________________	(70)

OFFICE USE ONLY

This Section has raised several problems which might relate to specialisation of various kinds.

Loss of subject offerings in some schools; lengthy travel commitments; extra studies out of school hours; loss of talented students; early decision-making; lack of continuity of subjects from primary school to high school, possible elitism with selective procedures.

Now that you have thought about each of these problems, would you want to reconsider the priorities you would place on different types of specialisation?

Q.40. Keeping in mind the problems considered in this Section, please indicate the priorities you would like to see given to the types of specialisation listed below. Read through the list first, then place a 1 against the specialisation you think should have the greatest priority, a 2 against the specialisation you think should have next priority, and so on.

TYPE OF SPECIALISATION	PRIORITY	
All-age school		(71)
School with special strength		(72)
Consortium of schools		(73)
Vocational school		(74)
School with selective specialist stream		(75)
School with different learning patterns		(76)
Out-of-school specialisation in camps, etc		(77)

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Please check that you have answered all questions

If you feel that you would like to make additional comments about any question, please feel free to do so. You may make notes alongside each question, or use the space provided below. We would welcome any extra comments you would like to make about the questions in this questionnaire or any other aspect of Government Secondary School Specialisation you wish.

(78)

(79)

- THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION -

NOTE TO TEACHERS

Dr. Mossenson has expressed a desire to include teachers as part of the community surveyed in this study.

You are being presented with the same questions as those which are to be given to parents and the community in general. However, in order for us to gain a different perspective, from the point-of-view of practising teachers, we would like you to answer the questionnaire as you would hope to have parents answer it.

i.e. for Sections B to E please answer each question with the response you would like parents to make, ideally.

(The questions in Section A refer to you personally and should be answered accordingly.)

Before you fill out the main questionnaire we would like some information about you as a teacher.

1. How many years of continuous full-time teaching have you completed? ☐

2. Which subject do you specialise in teaching? ____________________

3. In which year level do teach predominantly? ☐

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(1)	9
ID (2-4)	
CARD (5)	0
(6-7)	
(8-9)	
(10-11)	

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A Specialist School is one in which groups of students are selected from outside the normal boundaries of the school to take special studies in a subject in which they demonstrate particular talent or skill, e.g. Music at Perth Modern School. The Special Stream students in these schools take the specialist subject in addition to the normal range of secondary school subjects.

4. Have you ever taught in a Specialist School?

YES	
NO	

(12)

5. Would you like to teach in a Specialist School?

YES	
NO	
DON'T CARE	

(13)

APPENDIX II

THE TELEPHONE SURVEY

SPECIALIST SCHOOLS STUDY TELEPHONE SURVEY

1. Is music part of the program of subjects offered in your school?
2. Do you have a Departmental teacher/s of music (Senior Master, full or part-time music)?
3. Do any departmentally-paid music tutors visit the school? (Expand)
4. Is music available to all students? (Expand)
5. If not, are students who study music selected on any grounds?
6. Do students cross school boundaries to study music at your school?
7. Do you consider your school specialist with regard to the teaching of music?
8. Do parents or the Community in general see the school as specialist in music?
9. Does the Department recognise your school as specialist in this area?
10. If yes, what form does the recognition take? (title, funds, staffing, facilities)
11. If no, do you or any group associated with the school consider it should be recognised as specialist? (Expand)
12. Do special music students take music tuition outside school hours and/or in the regular school program? (Expand)
13. Would you like to make any further comments about specialisation in music provisions for gifted or talented?
    (What is your personal view of specialisation of the nature of Perth Modern School?)

Forty-six (46) secondary schools were approached in the telephone survey. Of these twelve (12) principals reported that music was not offered at all, as part of the program of subjects in the school. Several of those who responded that music was offered indicated that no general programme existed; only instrumental music with visiting tutors for small groups was offered.

Only twenty (20) schools offer a music programme to all students at some stage of their secondary schooling as six (6) of the schools offering general music had to exclude language students because of timetabling difficulties.

STAFFING

Only seven (7) schools offering music reported having a Senior Master in the subject. The majority of music staff taught other subjects part-time. One school reported having a qualified music teacher but offering no music because that subject was not timetabled due to previous failure to acquire staff and lack of notification for 1977. The specialist schools were generously staffed with full-time personnel. Twenty-six (26) schools had visiting instrumental tutors.

BOUNDARY CROSSING

Ten (10) schools indicated crossing of boundaries for the study of music; of these, only five (5) are specialist or Important Centres. An issue connected with this is the question of continuity of studies from primary to high school. In one area, a music specialist had been appointed to serve a group of primary schools, and some parents put pressure on the Education Department to provide continuity of music studies in the local high school.

The secondary school was approached by the Department for its view of the importance of music in the school and it had been indicated by the Principal that music did not assume much importance in that school; as a result, the primary music service was abolished, and a physical education specialist appointed.

FURTHER COMMENTS

Other issues raised in the telephone survey were the extra hours involved in specialist courses; the need for specialisation, but NOT at the cost of offerings in other schools; the concern over academic and ability requirements for specialisation; and the need for adequate staffing.

The specialist schools were certainly perceived by many principals to be at least part of the cause of limited or reduced offerings in their schools. These were the "Shop Windows" and all others had to take second place.

The following tables summarise the responses to the telephone survey by individual schools (which are not identified, to encourage frankness of responses).

		SCHOOL 1	SCHOOL 2
1.	IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes	Yes
2.	STAFF	I Teacher of Music (ordinary class music and theory).	1 Teacher (music and social studies/English).
3.	VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes	Yes
4.	AVAILABLE TO ALL?	All Year 8 has 1 period class music. Years 9 & 10 option.	General music and instrumental. Students generally very disinterested.
5.	SELECTION	For Instrumental music. Selection by examination in Year 7.	Year 7 for instrumental.
6.	BOUNDARY CROSSING	Yes. With Departmental permission.	Not aware of any.
7.	CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	Yes, with respect to instrumental (not a Mod).	No.
8.	PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	Yes, with respect to instrumental.	Parents are not anti. Positive about enrichment, but no pressure.
9.	DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	Not "Specialist" but certainly special (instrumental)	No.
10.	FORM OF RECOGNITION	Instruments. Tutors.	(Do get tutors, instruments).
11.	SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?		Probably not.
12.	SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	Instrumental students must agree to x hours practice outside school hours.	Practice.
13.	OTHER COMMENTS	Cost of tutor high. Selection must apply so that only those with aptitude get free tuition. Few students opt for music seems to depend on teacher.	Mod a good idea, but NOT if other schools are to be neglected. Music adds "colour"/"tone" to schools - now lost.

	SCHOOL 3	SCHOOL 4
1. IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes.	Yes.
2. STAFF	1 Senior Master.	1 Senior Master. 2/3 Teacher.
3. VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes.	Yes, 8 tutors.
4. AVAILABLE TO ALL?	Optional only.	All student Yrs. 8,9,10 get 1 period general appreciation. 2 period option offered Yrs. 9 & 10.
5. SELECTION	Not aware of any.	Instrumental students tested in Yrs. 7 for music aptitude. Must also be able academically.
6. BOUNDARY CROSSING	Yes. Parents aware of instrumental music.	Yes. Initiative comes from parents.
7. CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	Yes/No. There is a Special Music Room and School Band.	Yes. Not in same class as Mod. or Churchlands but special nevertheless.
8. PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	Yes/No. Instrumental music seen as special.	Yes.
9. DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	Not by title.	Yes.
10. FORM OF RECOGNITION	Tutors. Instruments.	Regarded as such by title. Extra good staffing. Paid tutors. Instruments.
11. SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	Parents might well think so.	-
12. SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	School hours plus practice outside school.	Some outside school hours. Tutor visits cause loss of other class time.
13. OTHER COMMENTS	Would be nice to see Art/Craft speciality married to music specialist in "the Arts".	Specialisation is a good thing. Public concerts, etc. add to recognition of school and awareness of programmes. Students add academic strength.

	SCHOOL 5	SCHOOL 6
1. IS MUSIC OFFERED?	No.	Yes.
2. STAFF	No.	Yes. Teaches mostly remedial reading. 4/5 teacher.
3. VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes. Guitar.	Yes.
4. AVAILABLE TO ALL?	No.	Instrumental. Music teacher provides theory.
5. SELECTION	No.	-
6. BOUNDARY CROSSING	No.	No.
7. CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	No.	In embryo stage.
8. PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	No.	Yes. Some feeling that way. Parental influence very important.
9. DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	No.	No.
10. FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	-
11. SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	-	-
12. SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	School hours.	School hours plus out of school practice.
13. OTHER COMMENTS	All in favour of specialisation. Adds something to a school. Compensation possible in other specialisations. Favours regional approach. What you lose in students in one area, you may gain in another.	Interested in Regionalization with a Regional Director. Saw Perth Modern as essential. Sees elitism question as valid - there are musical elite and should be catered for. But we need a second lesser degree of specialisation.

		SCHOOL 7	SCHOOL 8
1.	IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes.	Yes.
2.	STAFF	Yes.	Yes. 1 teacher (P/T).
3.	VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	No.	No. No response to requests to Department.
4.	AVAILABLE TO ALL?	All year 8 students (except for French students) get 1 period choral plus 1 period appreciation.	All year 8, 1 period. Years 9 and 10, option.
5.	SELECTION	No.	-
6.	BOUNDARY CROSSING	No.	No. Students are lost to other schools.
7.	CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	No.	No.
8.	PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	No.	No.
9.	DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	No.	No.
10.	FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	-
11.	SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	Not if its going to cost anything.	No.
12.	SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	-	-
13.	OTHER COMMENTS	Directly opposed to specialisation. Travel load completely unwise. Selection depletes top ability students in local schools. Does not like elitism. Feels "plush" areas are chosen by Department.	Feels specialist schools unfair. Have some merits but have done nothing for all the other schools. Parents will be apathetic in presenting viewpoint unless they are aware they are missing out on something.

	SCHOOL 9	SCHOOL 10
1. IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes. (Special school)	No. (Some get music if timetable not disrupted).
2. STAFF	2 Full time Senior Master teachers.	Yes. But was not timetabled.
3. VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes. (8-9 a.m.)	No.
4. AVAILABLE TO ALL?	All Year 8, 1 period a week.	No.
5. SELECTION	Year 7 selection.	-
6. BOUNDARY CROSSING	Yes.	No.
7. CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	Yes.	No.
8. PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	Yes.	No.
9. DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	Yes.	No.
10. FORM OF RECOGNITION	Instruments tutors title. Extra pay for band rehearsals.	-
11. SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	-	No.
12. SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	Sat. morning rehearsals. Early instrumental music practice.	-
13. OTHER COMMENTS	Feels Department wrong to site 2nd music school North of river. Music adds important dimension to life - should be in all schools. Opposed to specialisation in sport. Should stay competetive.	Music has lost prestige. Perth Modern has done well but now we have extremes - all or nothing, it seems music teachers unhappy about lack of support.

	SCHOOL 11	SCHOOL 12
1. IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes/No. "Can't take a deep breath first...?"	Yes.
2. STAFF	No. Senior Master English provides some music appreciation.	Yes. (Music plus social studies.
3. VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	No.	Yes. Guitar.
4. AVAILABLE TO ALL?	Bulk of Year 8 get appreciation with Senior Master English. French students get none.	Year 8 general (except French students. 1 "Special" class 4 periods guitar plus 1 theory.
5. SELECTION	-	Year 7 testing.
6. BOUNDARY CROSSING	-	No. But this is expected in future.
7. CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	-	Yes. (Becoming).
8. PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	-	Apparently yes.
9. DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	-	Not yet!
10. FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	-
11. SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	-	Yes.
12. SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	-	Practice.
13. OTHER COMMENTS	Perth Modern has done nothing for the rest of the students in the State - some of whom have never heard a note at school. Teacher must be superior.	Specialisation in creative things important. These are life-time interests. Regional influence important.

	SCHOOL 13	SCHOOL 14
1. IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes.	"It's Extinct!". Losing students to other schools.
2. STAFF	1 Departmental teacher.	-
3. VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Guitar. 1 tutor has visited but students have not maintained interest.	Yes. 2 guitar/violin.
4. AVAILABLE TO ALL?	General music all Year 8. Optional Year 9.	-
5. SELECTION	?	-
6. BOUNDARY CROSSING	Some possible.	-
7. CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	No.	-
8. PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	No. There would be pockets of strong interest but most have no background.	-
9. DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	No.	-
10. FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	-
11. SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	-	-
12. SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	Practice.	-
13. OTHER COMMENTS	Specialisation for gifted - YES. But others must not miss out. Music can provide a life-time interest and should be available to all. Conditions for music appalling at (School 13)	Specialisation essential, but all students should be exposed to music. Adds to whole school tone. Contributory primaries very interested. Sorry not to be able to continue. Losing students.

		SCHOOL 15	SCHOOL 16
1.	IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes. A very soft spot.	Yes. (Tutor system only).
2.	STAFF	Yes. 3/5 teacher.	No.
3.	VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes. 2 guitar/violin.	Yes. Guitar.
4.	AVAILABLE TO ALL?	General music all Year 8. Optional Years 9 and 10.	No.
5.	SELECTION	Year 7 testing for instrumental.	Continue from primary.
6.	BOUNDARY CROSSING	?	No.
7.	CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	No.	No.
8.	PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	No.	No.
9.	DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	No.	No.
10.	FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	-
11.	SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	To a point. Primary schools strong.	Would like to build up music but not to point of specialisation.
12.	SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	Practice.	Practice.
13.	OTHER COMMENTS	Would like enrichment. But there is not demand in a "working man's district" for specialisation like Modern. There is need for extension for gifted but schools should not lose their "cream".	Proposal for a dual Community/School Centre by City of Stirling, Shire of Wanneroo if Department will share 1/3 of cost.

		SCHOOL 17	SCHOOL 18
1.	IS MUSIC OFFERED?	A disaster area.	Nothing at all.
2.	STAFF	No.	No.
3.	VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes. Classical guitar.	No. Would like to have one.
4.	AVAILABLE TO ALL?	No. Year 8, 1 period per week. Club activities from staff resources only.	-
5.	SELECTION	-	-
6.	BOUNDARY CROSSING	No.	-
7.	CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	No.	-
8.	PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	No.	-
9.	DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	No.	-
10.	FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	-
11.	SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	Would very much like to have better cultural provisions in the school.	-
12.	SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	-	-
13.	OTHER COMMENTS	On side with the idea of talented pupils being provided with opportunities to develop. But non-specialist schools must still be able to provide specialist subjects.	Specialisation is well and good but should be on the top of a broad base in every school. Department pouring resources into special schools - does not seem to be any left over.

		SCHOOL 19	SCHOOL 20
1.	IS MUSIC OFFERED?	None (new school).	Non-existent.
2.	STAFF	-	-
3.	VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	-	-
4.	AVAILABLE TO ALL?	-	-
5.	SELECTION	-	-
6.	BOUNDARY CROSSING	-	-
7.	CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	-	-
8.	PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	-	-
9.	DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	-	-
10.	FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	-
11.	SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	Already had approaches from community. Primaries teach music - want continuation.	Contributory primaries strong and very interested.
12.	SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	-	-
13.	OTHER COMMENTS	A good idea for those with special talent and special zeal.	Rather see Modern than nothing for the talented. Concerned that specialist school takes best students and makes it harder for schools to establish strong programmes.

	SCHOOL 21	SCHOOL 22
1. IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes.	Yes.
2. STAFF	1 Full-time teacher, Years 8 and 9.	1 Senior master. 1 Teacher music/English.
3. VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes. Guitar 6-8 students.	Yes. 5 or 6.
4. AVAILABLE TO ALL?	Yes (at present). [school only has Yrs.8,9].	Class music plus options.
5. SELECTION	-	In primary school. General selection (only up to a point). Interest may determine entry to programme at high school.
6. BOUNDARY CROSSING	No.	Yes. A few cases (4 in 1977).
7. CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	No.	No.
8. PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	No.	Very slight tendency, yes.
9. DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	No.	No.
10. FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	-
11. SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	No.	No.
12. SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	School hours plus practice.	All school hours. But students miss other periods (kept to a minimum).
13. OTHER COMMENTS	In favour of music specialisation. Allows students stimulation of a teacher who really knows all about it.	Specialisation at Modern serves a very real need. O.K. provided there are enough schools like Government Stirling which can provide a sound programme at next level.

		SCHOOL 23	SCHOOL 24
1.	IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Instrumental.	No.
2.	STAFF	No.	No.
3.	VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes. Clarinet, Flute, Guitar.	Yes. Guitar.
4.	AVAILABLE TO ALL?	No.	-
5.	SELECTION	Music aptitude test.	-
6.	BOUNDARY CROSSING	I would hope not.	-
7.	CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	No.	-
8.	PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	No.	-
9.	DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	No.	-
10.	FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	-
11.	SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	No.	Not necessarily specialist. But some of primaries very strong on music - disgraceful that high school cannot provide continuation.
12.	SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	School hours plus practice.	-
13.	OTHER COMMENTS	Main function of specialist school should be as a lighthouse - should allow for growth in other schools. There should be no denial of development of music as a natural thing in all schools.	Is responsibility of all schools to provide rounded programme. Modern is a "shop window" and other schools get the complete brush-off with regard to music. Does not mind elitist schools for truly gifted where students are selected on academic (and other) excellence. Otherwise specialisation a retrograde step.

	SCHOOL 25	SCHOOL 26
1. IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes.	Yes.
2. STAFF	Yes. Senior Master and 3 teachers.	1 teacher.
3. VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes. 18-20.	No.
4. AVAILABLE TO ALL?	Yes.	Class music (appreciation) to all lower school.
5. SELECTION	Yes.	-
6. BOUNDARY CROSSING	Yes.	No.
7. CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	Yes.	No.
8. PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	Yes.	No.
9. DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	Yes.	No.
10. FORM OF RECOGNITION	Title, funds, staffing, instruments.	-
11. SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	-	We would love to have it.
12. SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	Much outside school hours.	-
13. OTHER COMMENTS	Very keen on specialisation more particularly for the generally highly able child.	Specialisation is O.K. We seem to be a little isolated down here and any requests to the Department seem to fall on deaf ears.

		SCHOOL 27	SCHOOL 28
1.	IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes.	Yes.
2.	STAFF	Yes. Specialist teacher.	Yes. Part-time.
3.	VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes. 2 brass.	Yes.
4.	AVAILABLE TO ALL?	Confined to lower school. Mainly guitar.	All Year 8 music appreciation.
5.	SELECTION	Usual primary.	Aptitude test.
6.	BOUNDARY CROSSING	No.	Yes.
7.	CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	Certainly not a special school for talented students.	Could say that, yes.
8.	PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	No.	Very hard to say. Not advertised but well-known.
9.	DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	No.	No.---- Yes?
10.	FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	Instruments, tutors.
11.	SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	No.	Yes. Would give added facilities and allow development.
12.	SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	2 periods in school plus 1 in youngsters own time.	Fully within school hours.
13.	OTHER COMMENTS	Every encouragement should be given to the talented. Modern a good thing. Applies also to other areas of giftedness, e.g. sport.	In favour of specialisation. We should encourage talent levels of specialisation should be introduced and schools should have more than one speciality.

	SCHOOL 29	SCHOOL 30
1. IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Non-existent.	Yes. Just introduced.
2. STAFF	No.	Yes. (Not specially trained in music).
3. VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	No.	Yes.
4. AVAILABLE TO ALL?	No.	Years 8 and 9, one term. Theory and appreciation.
5. SELECTION	-	Music aptitude test, Year 7.
6. BOUNDARY CROSSING	No. Students are drafted to John Forrest.	No. Would not give authority.
7. CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	No.	No.
8. PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	No.	No.
9. DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	No.	No.
10. FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	-
11. SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	Parental, community pressure for some music exists.	Great deal of parental interest and pressure - but not to become special.
12. SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	-	All tuition plus couple practice sessions in school time.
13. OTHER COMMENTS	Agrees with gifted getting provision, but concerned at "creaming" effects. Loses students in Music, Language, Dance, Art. No support from Music Branch.	Does not like the idea of specialist schools creaming off the talent.

		SCHOOL 31	SCHOOL 32
1.	IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes.	Yes. (Only visiting tutors).
2.	STAFF	Yes. 1 teacher full-time.	-
3.	VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes. 5.	Yes.
4.	AVAILABLE TO ALL?	Yes. Class basis first year. TAE class 4th year.	No.
5.	SELECTION	Music aptitude test. No academic requirement.	-
6.	BOUNDARY CROSSING	No. Not unless for languages.	-
7.	CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	No.	-
8.	PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	No.	-
9.	DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	No.	-
10.	FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	-
11.	SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	No.	School has a $29,000 hall/gym and a music room. Local feeder primaries very strong on music - a lamentable situation.
12.	SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	Band practice after school.	-
13.	OTHER COMMENTS	Regional approach favoured. Not in favour of the whole notion of specialisation schools need important socialising effects of high ability bids. Doubts the extremely capable will fail to succeed without specialisation.	Perth Modern commended for developing degrees of excellence. Achievement Certificate has developed a "plateau of mediocrity". Approved specialisation, but not if others suffer.

	SCHOOL 33	SCHOOL 34
1. IS MUSIC OFFERED?	None at all.	Yes.
2. STAFF	No.	Yes. But basically an English teacher.
3. VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	No.	Yes.
4. AVAILABLE TO ALL?	-	Music appreciation for Year 8.
5. SELECTION	-	Usual in primary.
6. BOUNDARY CROSSING	-	No transport problems.
7. CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	-	No.
8. PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	-	No.
9. DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	-	No.
10. FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	-
11. SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	-	No.
12. SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	-	School hours plus practice.
13. OTHER COMMENTS	Sees no alternative to specialisation - but would not be too sure about creating new schools for the sake of specialisation - existing ones meet needs.	Art/Music O.K., they lead to academic qualifications. Other subjects often more like hobby - may have implications for maintenance of special programmes.

		SCHOOL 35	SCHOOL 36
1.	IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes.	Instrumental only. Grim. Almost non-existent.
2.	STAFF	Yes. Part-time media plus music.	No. A former music teacher helps to take options.
3.	VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes.	Yes, 3.
4.	AVAILABLE TO ALL?	Most Year 8s get general music. (timetable problems).	Option only.
5.	SELECTION	Usual in primary.	-
6.	BOUNDARY CROSSING	No.	No.
7.	CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	No.	No.
8.	PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	Not necessarily specialist, but special.	No.
9.	DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	No.	No.
10.	FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	-
11.	SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	Music Action Group of parents keen to have a big music component in school.	No. But very concerned to get general music going.
12.	SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	School hours plus practice.	School hours plus practice.
13.	OTHER COMMENTS	Has its place, but essentially favours comprehensive approach.	Approves of Modern, but sees possibility of other schools having good provision operating in parallel. Modern should help other schools, but fears training system may be a narrowing experience. Doesn't approve of sport schools.

		SCHOOL 37	SCHOOL 38
1.	IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes.	Yes.
2.	STAFF	Yes. English and Music.	Yes. 2/5.
3.	VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes, 2.	Yes.
4.	AVAILABLE TO ALL?	All optional.	All Year 8 have 2 periods per week for 6 months. Options Years 9 and 10.
5.	SELECTION	No. Interest is criterion.	Aptitude test.
6.	BOUNDARY CROSSING	No.	No.
7.	CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	No.	No.
8.	PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	No.	Difficult to tell. Band has good name.
9.	DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	No.	No.
10.	FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	-
11.	SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	No.	No.
12.	SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	School hours.	School hours plus practice.
13.	OTHER COMMENTS	Against specialisation. Favours regionalisation.	Specialist schools have their place for the development of expertise and excellence. But in general school recreative approach is emphasized. Much lack of interest in keeping on.

		SCHOOL 39	SCHOOL 40
1.	IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes. But very very poor.	Yes.
2.	STAFF	Yes. But a poor teacher with no control.	Senior master and part-time teacher.
3.	VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes.	Yes.
4.	AVAILABLE TO ALL?	All Year 8 general music and appreciation. Options Years 9 and 10.	Yes.
5.	SELECTION	Selection in primary.	Usual primary.
6.	BOUNDARY CROSSING	No. Not yet.	Yes.
7.	CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	No.	Yes. A specialist school in music, but not Modern standard.
8.	PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	Doubt it.	Yes.
9.	DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	No.	Yes (to a point).
10.	FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	Instruments, etc.
11.	SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	No.	-
12.	SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	All hours.	Band rehearsal after school.
13.	OTHER COMMENTS	Can see reason for specialisation in music and art but would not like to see it go further. Not pleased with notion of isolating best students.	Specialisation has not proved wrong, must be given a real trial to be proved right. Need highly efficient administration. Notes problem of "sensitive" students amongst talented.

		SCHOOL 41	SCHOOL 42
1.	IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes.	No. A musical desert.
2.	STAFF	Yes, 2/5.	No. Has tried to get staff.
3.	VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	No.	-
4.	AVAILABLE TO ALL?	1 period per week. Essentially appreciation.	-
5.	SELECTION	No.	-
6.	BOUNDARY CROSSING	No.	-
7.	CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	No.	-
8.	PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	No.	-
9.	DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	No.	-
10.	FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	-
11.	SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	-	-
12.	SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	-	-
13.	OTHER COMMENTS	Envy Perth Modern. But rest of schools are left out in the cold - very sad.	Not happy about loss of top students to specialist schools. Makes upper school deplete of "right sort of person".

		SCHOOL 43	SCHOOL 44
1.	IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes.	Yes.
2.	STAFF	Yes.	Yes.
3.	VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes.	Yes.
4.	AVAILABLE TO ALL?	Year 8 and Optional Years 9 and 10.	Language classes miss out on music.
5.	SELECTION	Yes. At primary school.	Yes.
6.	BOUNDARY CROSSING	No.	No.
7.	CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	No.	No.
8.	PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	No.	No.
9.	DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	No.	No.
10.	FORM OF RECOGNITION	-	No.
11.	SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	No.	No.
12.	SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	In school hours.	No.
13.	OTHER COMMENTS	Possibly has merit in one way. Students should not be penalised if they have talent. Should be allowed to develop it. But why not for other areas? (other than music).	(CONFUSED PICTURE) "Accidental" special class of 5 students exists - originally to have gone to Modern but now being ignored.

SCHOOL 45

1.	IS MUSIC OFFERED?	Yes. (Instrumental only).
2.	STAFF	1 Senior master. 1 Part-time teacher of theory.
3.	VISITING INSTRUMENTAL TUTORS	Yes.
4.	AVAILABLE TO ALL?	Instrumental music only. No general provision for Year 8.
5.	SELECTION	Yes. Music test, particular skills, average or above average ability.
6.	BOUNDARY CROSSING	Yes.
7.	CONSIDER SCHOOL SPECIAL	It is not a special school, but it has a specialist feature (175 instrumental students).
8.	PARENT/COMMUNITY VIEW AS SPECIAL	Yes.
9.	DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION	Yes. (Not by title).
10.	FORM OF RECOGNITION	Funds. Insurance of Music, Instruments.
11.	SHOULD IT BE SPECIAL?	Parents pushed for it, but school eventually persuaded against it. (Outside hours not required at (School 45)
12.	SPECIAL MUSIC EXTRA?	Agree to Sat. morning concert band.
13.	OTHER COMMENTS	Specialist schools involve problems of student time and travel. They are restrictive and can tend to become an elite rather than offer broad music in general.

APPENDIX III

DISTRIBUTION FIGURES

The following figures provide detailed distributions of responses to the ranking questions, Q10, Q12, Q14 and Q27.

In each figures, the following applies:

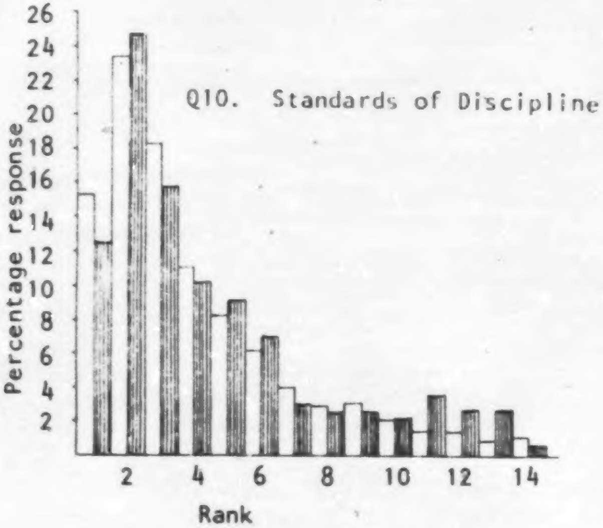
1. the vertical axis represents percentage response, each mark representing 2%.

2. the horizontal axis represents rank, with highest rank (1) to the left and lowest to the right.

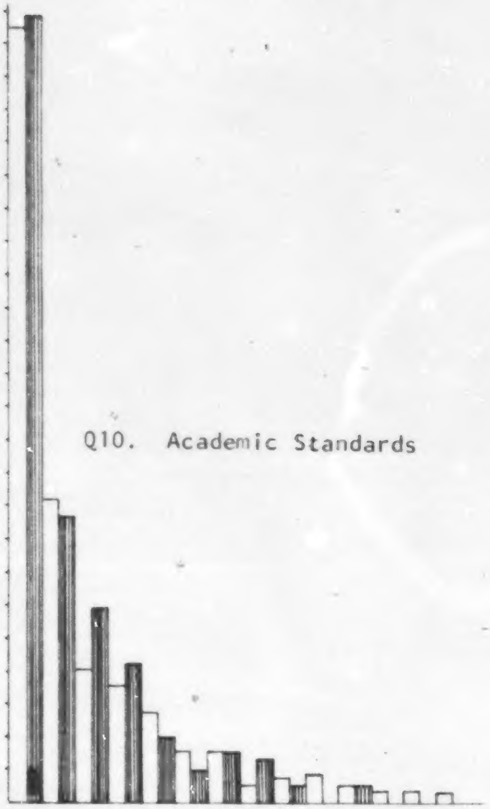
3. all teacher responses are shown as shaded, and community responses blank.

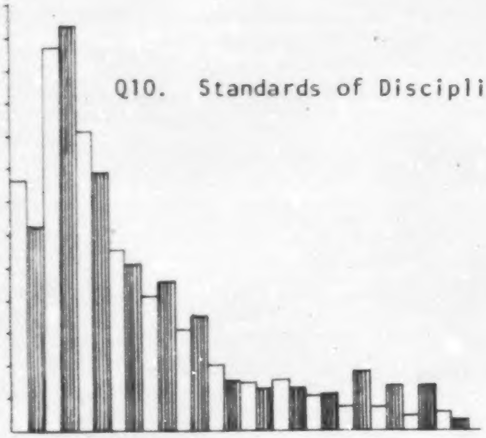
4. figures are given in order of community ranking, first figure having the highest median rank.

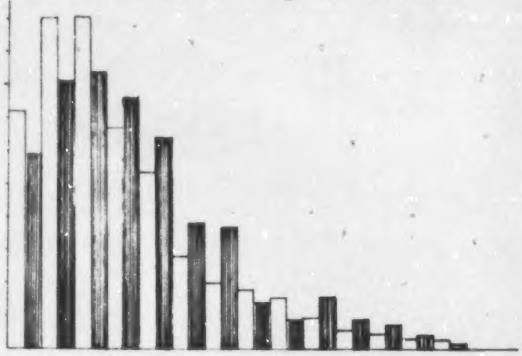
An example is shown below:

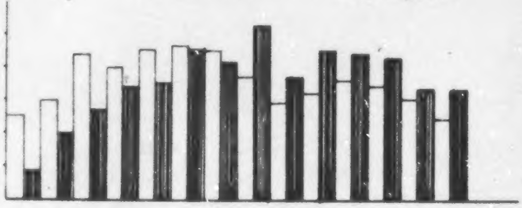


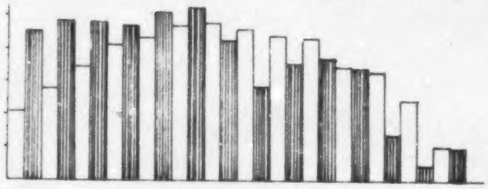
"If the Education Department allowed you to choose to send your children to any State secondary school, what sort of things would you take into account in making your choice?'

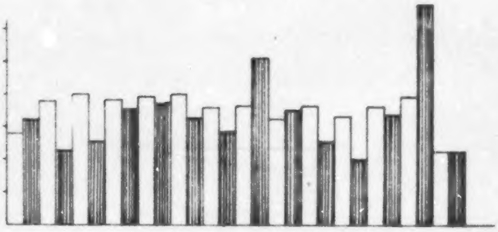

Q10. Academic Standards

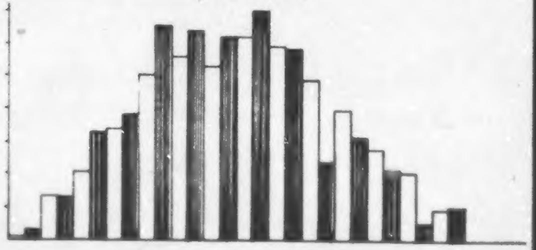

Q10. Standards of Discipline

Q10. Range of Subjects Offered


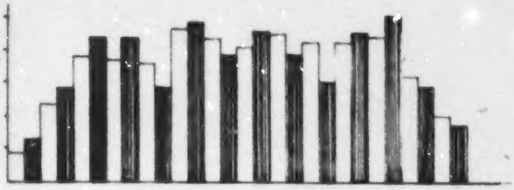
Q10. Convenience of Transport


Q10. Friendly School Atmosphere


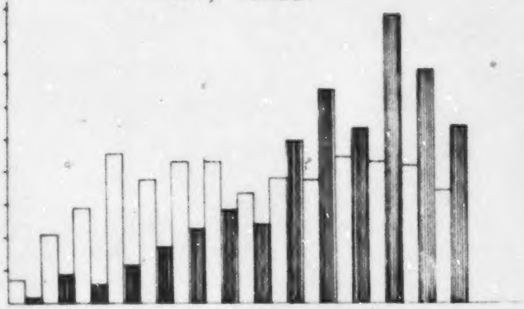
Q10. Reputation of the School in the Community


Q10. Facilities such as Library/ Swimming Pool


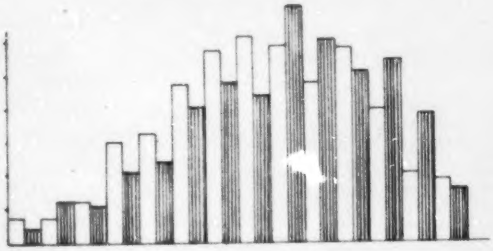
Q10. Special Strength in Particular Subject



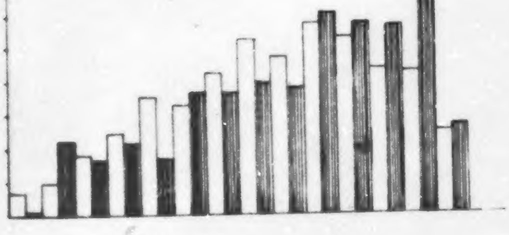
Q10. Continuity of Subjects from Primary School



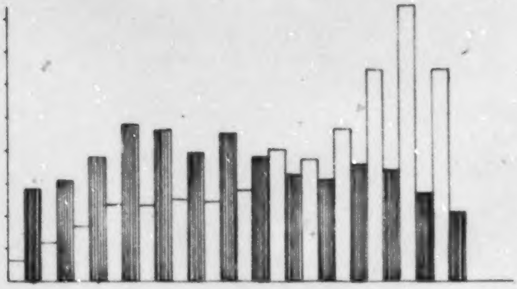
Q10. Sporting Facilities



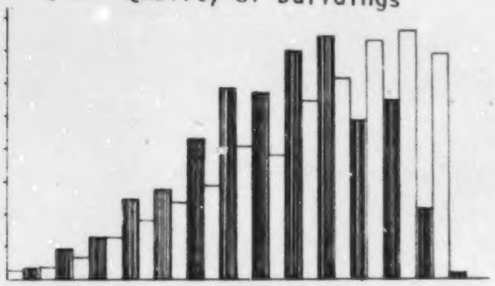
Q10. "Home" Room or Other Groupings

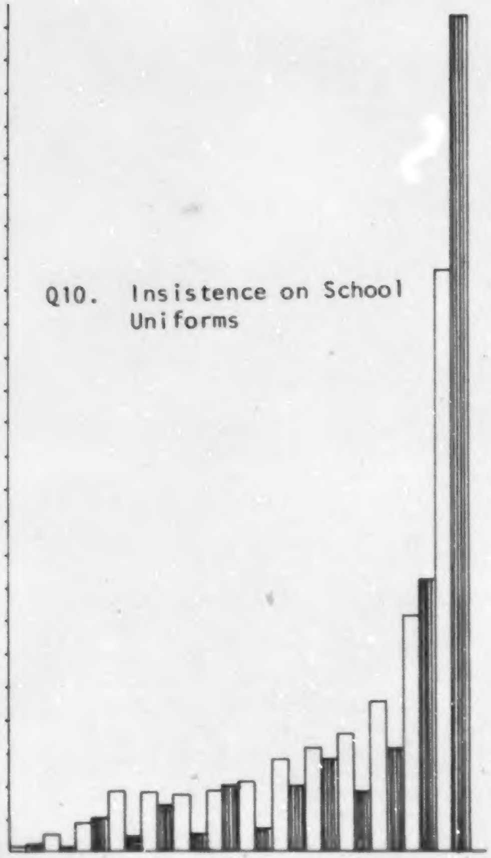


Q10. Size of School



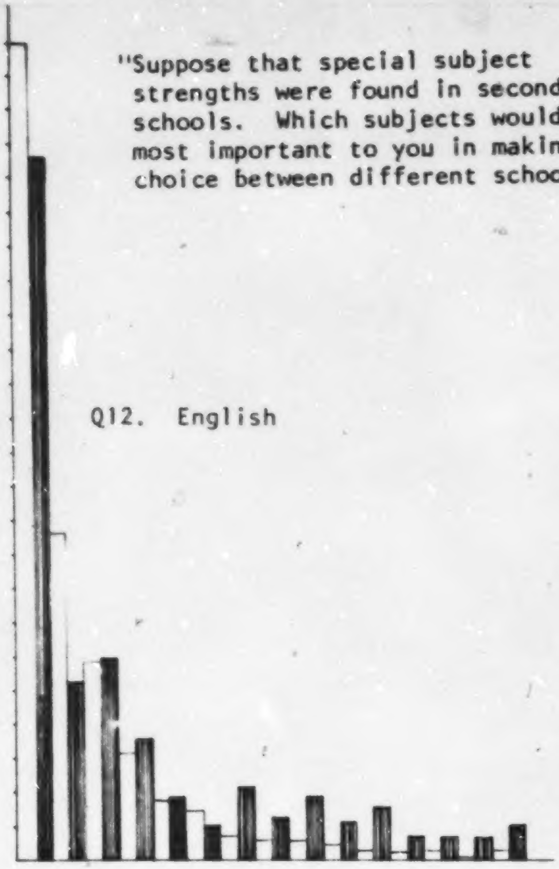
Q10. Quality of Buildings



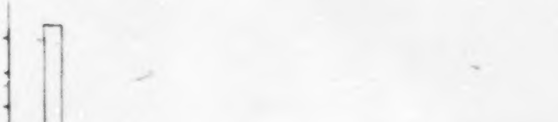


Q10. Insistence on School Uniforms

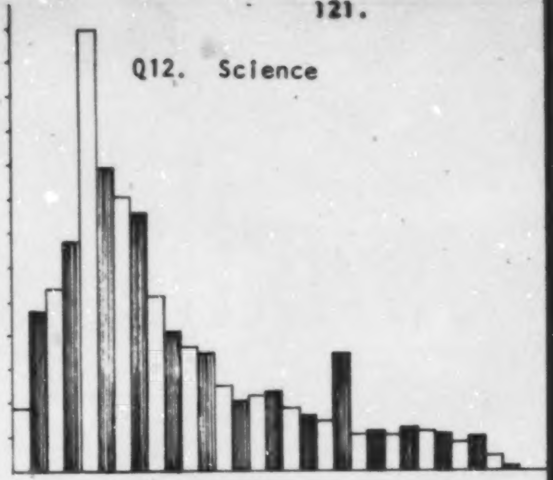
"Suppose that special subject strengths were found in secondary schools. Which subjects would be most important to you in making a choice between different schools?"



Q12. English

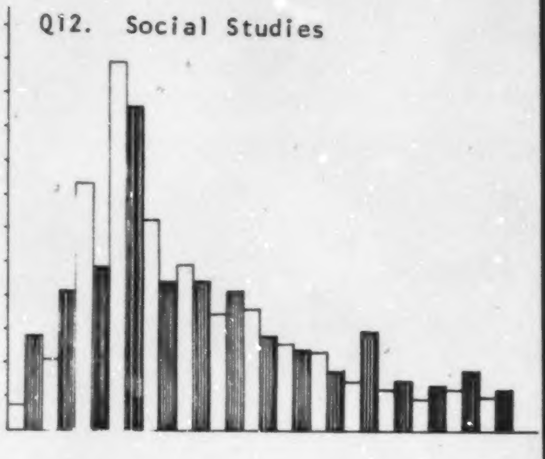


Q12. Mathematics

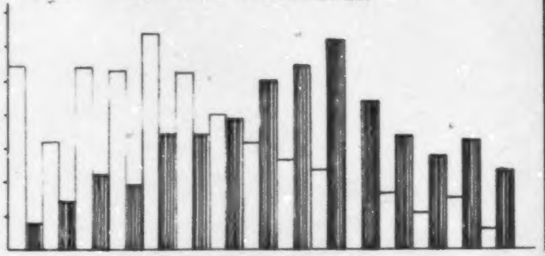


Q12. Science

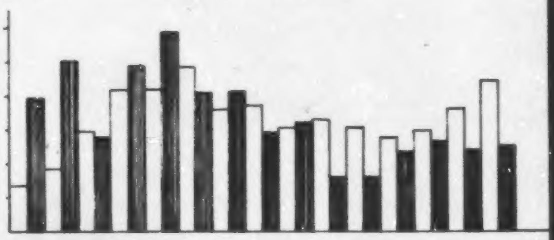
Q12. Social Studies

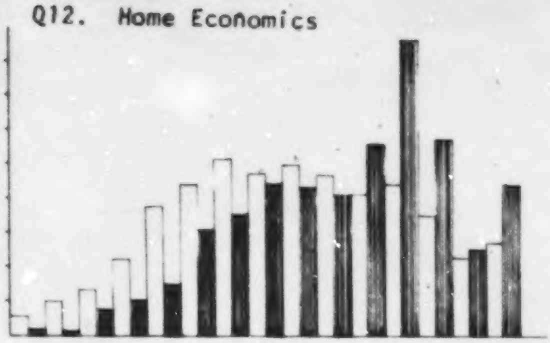


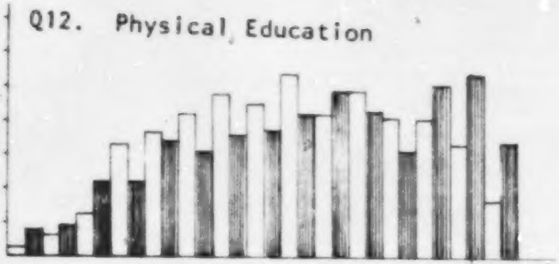
Q12. Business Education

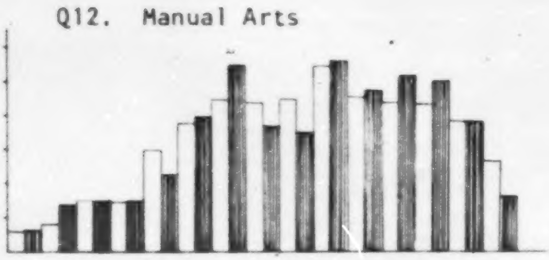


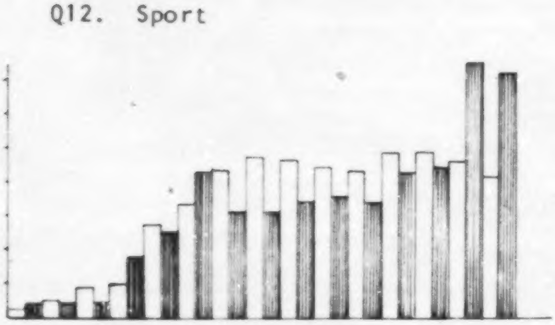
Q12. Foreign Languages

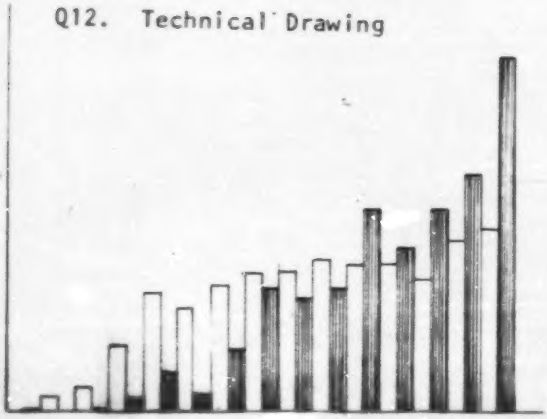


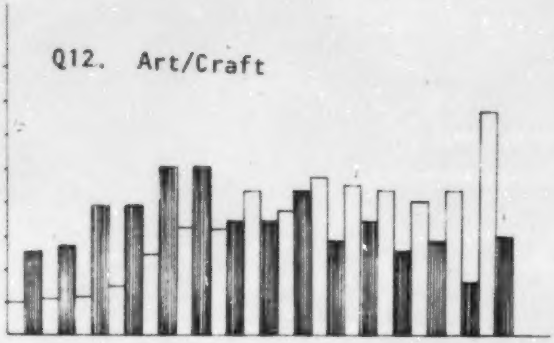

Q12. Home Economics

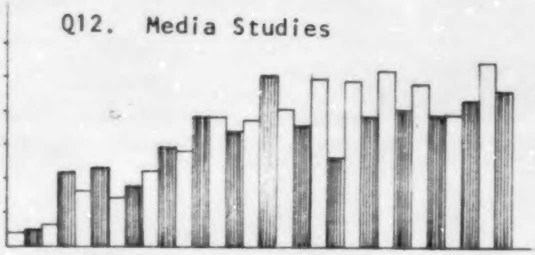

Q12. Physical Education

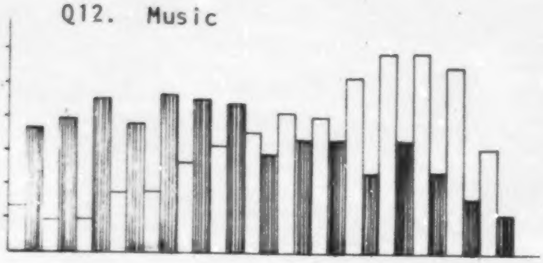

Q12. Manual Arts

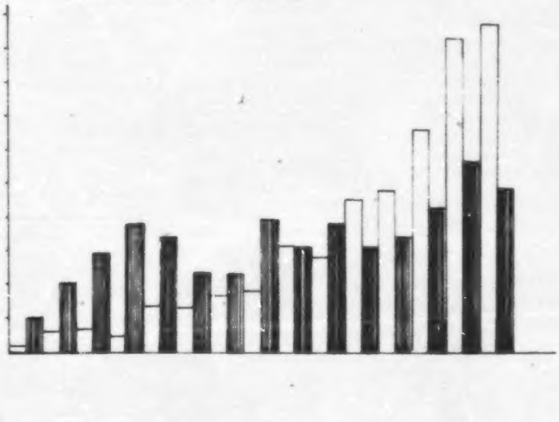

Q12. Sport


Q12. Technical Drawing

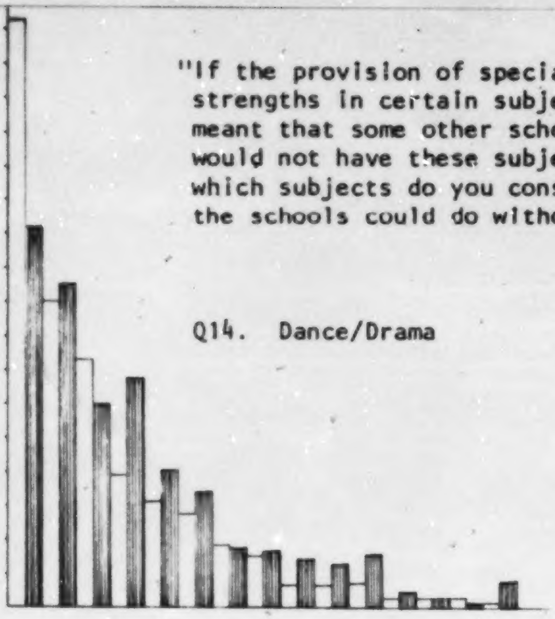

Q12. Art/Craft


Q12. Media Studies

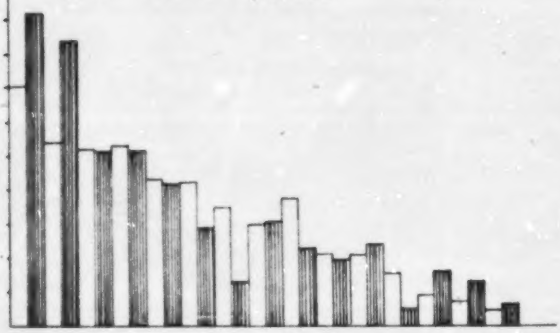

Q12. Music


Q12. Dance/Drama

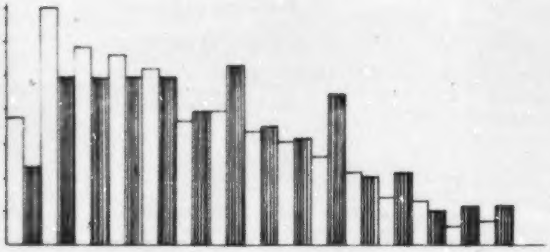
"If the provision of special strengths in certain subjects meant that some other schools would not have these subjects, which subjects do you consider the schools could do without"?



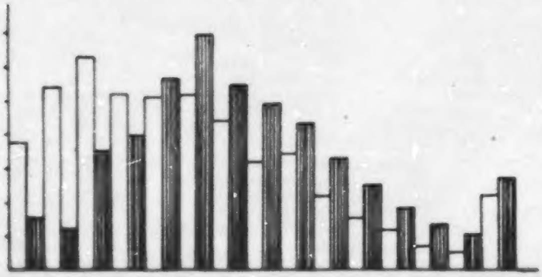
Q14. Dance/Drama



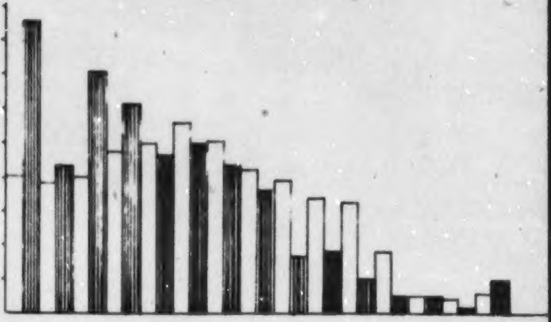
Q14. Media Studies



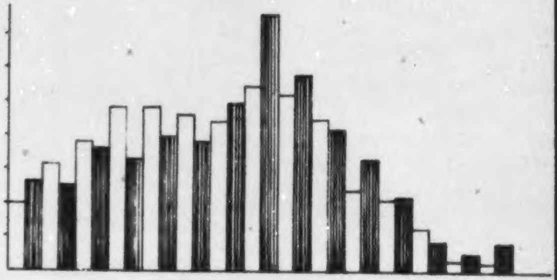
Q14. Music



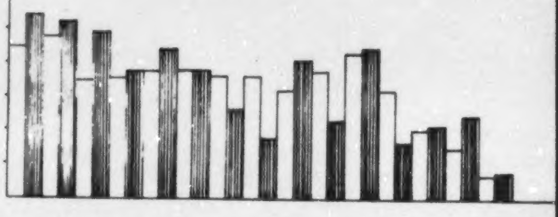
Q14. Art/Craft



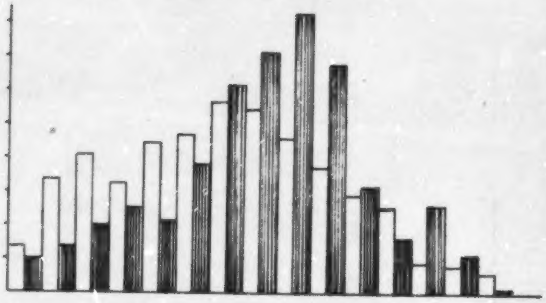
Q14. Technical Drawing



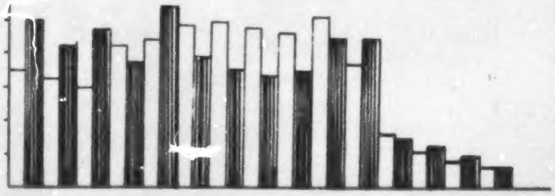
Q14. Foreign Languages



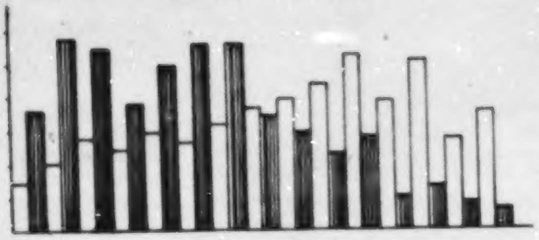
Q14. Home Economics



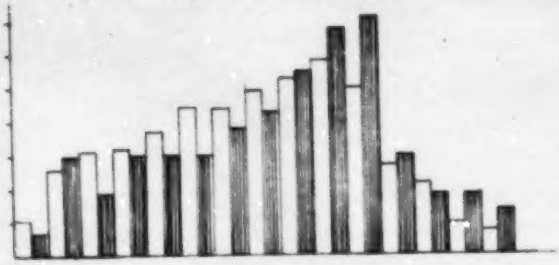
Q14. Manual Arts



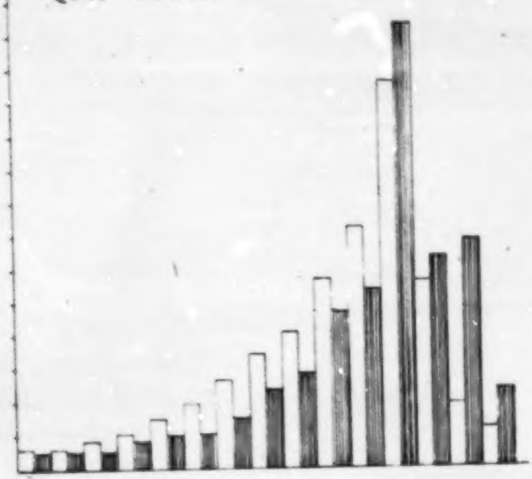
Q14. Sport



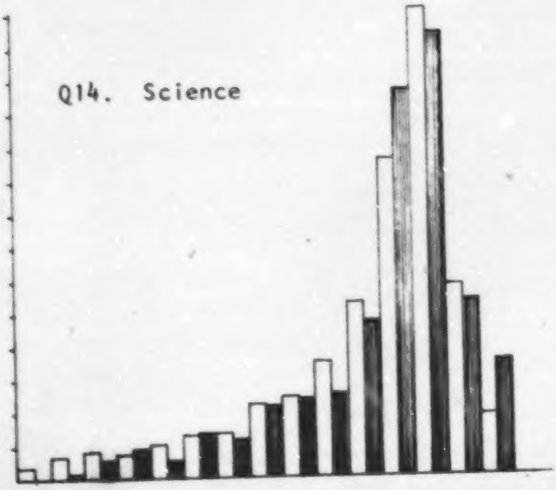
Q14. Business Education



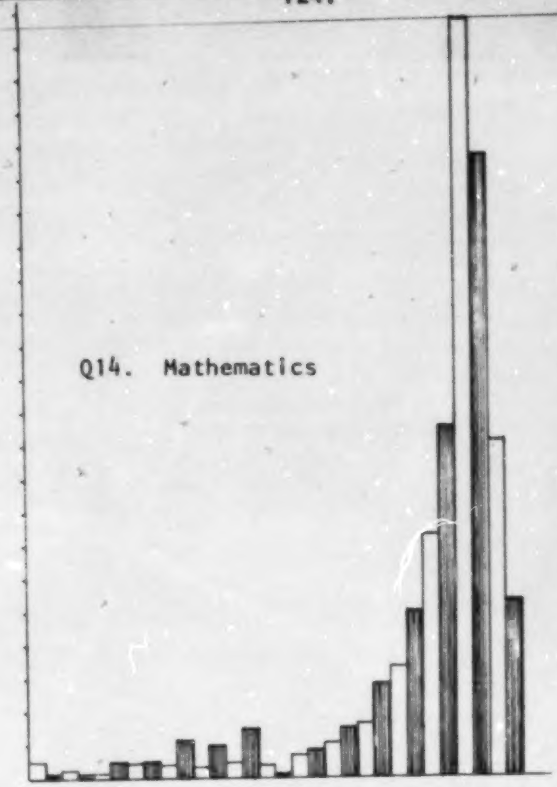
Q14. Physical Education



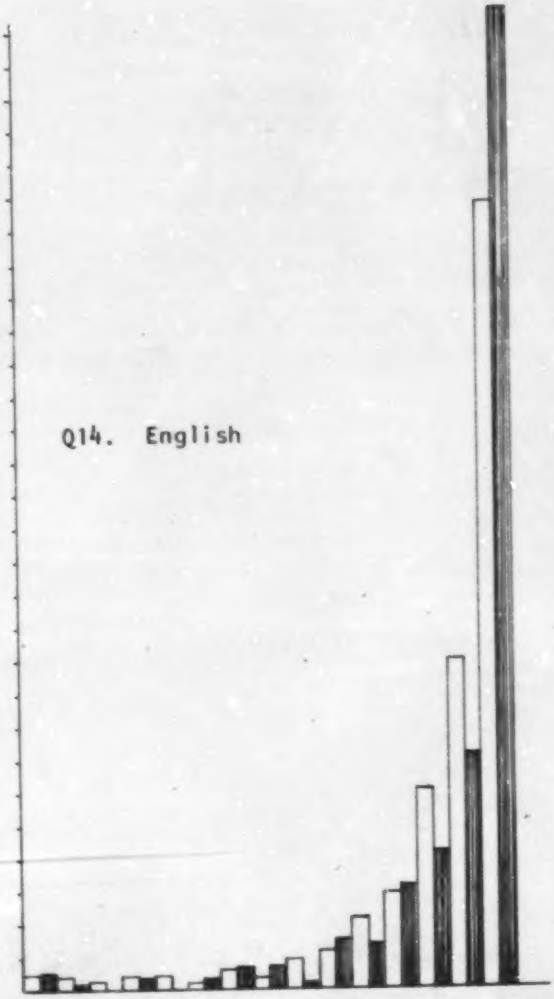
Q14. Social Studies



Q14. Science

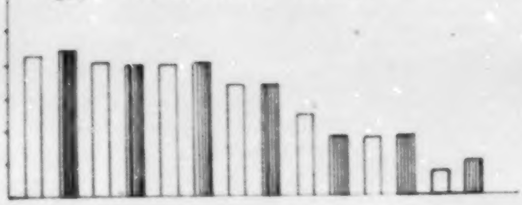


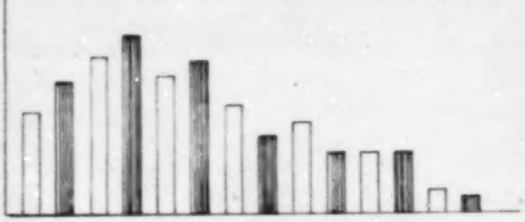
Q14. Mathematics

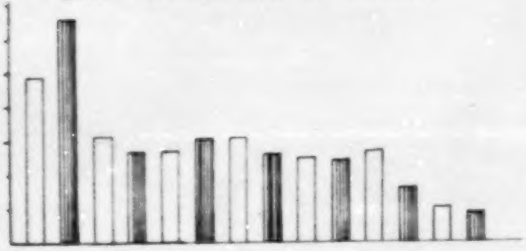


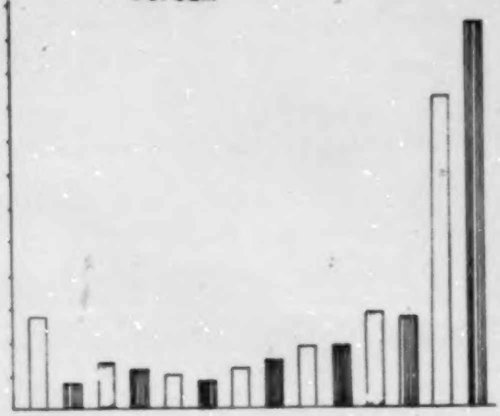
Q14. English

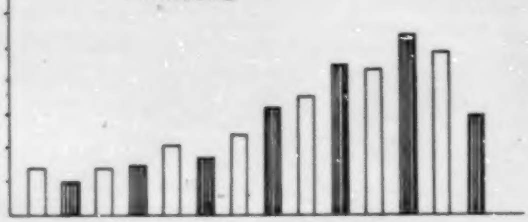
"Suppose you were in a position to decide the future directions the Education Department should take with regard to specialisation in the Secondary Schools. Given the restricted finances and resources you might have to consider because of budget pressures, which of the various types of specialisation mentioned in this Section would you give priority?"

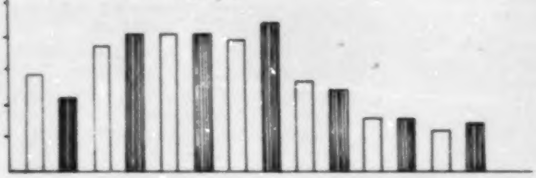

Q27. Vocational School

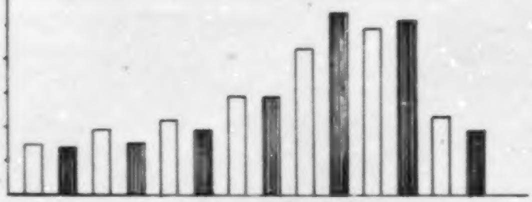

Q27. School with Special Strength


Q27. Consortium of Schools


Q27. School with Selected Specialist Stream


Q27. School with Different Learning Patterns


Q27. Out-of-school Specialisation in Camps


Q27. All-age School

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